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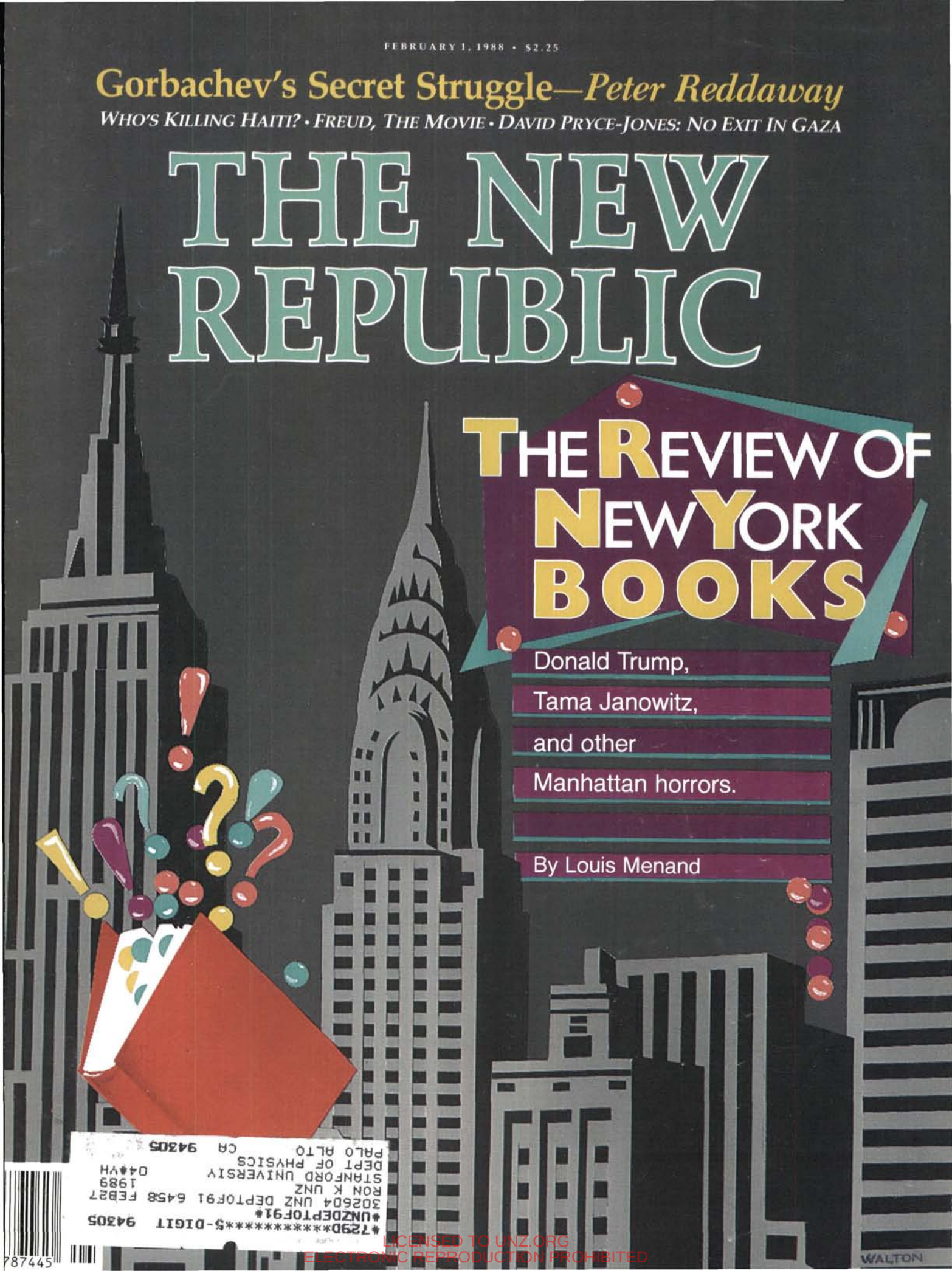
# THE NEW REPUBLIC



## THE REVIEW OF NEW YORK BOOKS

Donald Trump,
Tama Janowitz,
and other
Manhattan horrors.

By Louis Menand

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FOUNDED 1914 — *A Weekly Journal of Opinion* — ISSUE 3,811

WASHINGTON, D.C. — FEBRUARY 1, 1988



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THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 198, Number 5, Issue 3,811, February 1, 1988. (Printed in the U.S. on January 13, 1988.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 4 & 11, July 18 & 25, Aug. 8 & 15, and Sept. 12 & 19, 1988) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. Leadership Network advertising (212) 684-5500. Yearly subscriptions, $56; foreign, $81; Canada, $70. Back issues, $2.50 (includes postage & handling).


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(ISSN 0028-6583). Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Available on microfilm from University Microfilms Intrnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106 and Bell & Howell, Old Mansfield Road, Wooster, OH 44691. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. **Subscribers:** Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscription inquiries to **Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 56515, Boulder, CO 80322.** For subscription problems call **800-525-0643.**





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# CORRESPONDENCE

## MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

*To the editors:*
Robert Wright would have us believe that the classification of alcoholism as a disease is a crutch, perhaps worse ("Alcohol and Free Will," December 14). It is this definition that gives him the most trouble. Alcoholism is not a disease. It is merely self-will run riot; it is venialness, the deliberate destruction of health, families; a pathology, an alibi, an economic burden on the fortunates. Here lies the flaw. It is not free will that makes or permits alcoholics to continue their path to oblivion. It is alcohol's infestation that has overcome the capacity to exercise free will. This the non-alcoholic cannot understand. "All he has to do is stop drinking," and yet this is exactly what he cannot do. This paradox is the insanity, the disease.

FRANK M. JENKS
*Wakefield, Rhode Island*

*To the editors:*
I agree with Robert Wright's assessment of alcoholism and free will. But he did not specify that alcoholism is one of the very few "diseases" that can be cured essentially by the victim. As members of Alcoholics Anonymous will attest, the first step toward a "cure" is for the alcoholic to accept responsibility for his actions and admit to his addiction (not disease). I'm sorry for the two veterans who missed the education benefits boat, and am glad that they are "reformed" and want to put their lives back together. It would be absurd, however, for society to compensate them for their lost opportunities—to pay them for no longer being a drain on society. And just how reformed are these plaintiffs if they apparently don't feel that sobriety is its own reward?

JOAN EGAN
*Arlington, Virginia*

*To the editors:*
Robert Wright asks whether insurance premiums of teetotalers should pay for other people's excesses, and whether the Veterans Administration and Medicare should pay the medical bills of those "who can't stay off the bottle." As long as society continues to foot the bill for smokers who don't quit smoking, for morbidly obese persons who don't lose weight, for unmarried, unemployed women who don't use birth control, and for accident victims who don't wear seat belts, we have no option but to provide medical services to alcoholics. To suggest otherwise, as Wright does, is morally reprehensible. Whether or not alcoholism is defined as a disease, as long as we are unable to "cure" alcoholics we have a responsibility to provide them with health care and treatment programs.

LEE R. LEER
NANCY E. DYE
*Redlands, California*

## CHURCHILL AND SDI

*To the editors:*
I spent a good deal of time trying to acquaint Andrew Sullivan with our non-profit, non-partisan organization concerned with the examination of Churchill's thought and the preservation of his writings ("Churchill Envy," December 7). John Kenneth Galbraith writes, in our upcoming journal, that Churchill's talents depended on "a truly fearsome certainty that he was completely right." Sullivan is also fearsomely certain that he is right. But Churchill, when he laced into somebody, cited facts, not malarkey.

At Representative Jim Courter's Dallas press conference, Sullivan asked the first dumb question: "How can you say Churchill's 1930s advocacy of a radar net has any bearing on SDI and nuclear missiles?" Nonplussed, Courter gave a dusky answer. It wasn't simply radar that Churchill advocated in the '30s—it was comprehensive defense against the then-apocalyptic threat of bomber aircraft, thought to be as invincible as the ICBM is thought to be today. Churchill said it was not. It took a bloody war to prove him right. Allow me to provide a counterargument: Churchill's 1930s "SDI" was a response to instability (the rearmament of Germany); today's SDI would destabilize a relatively stable situation (the ICBM standoff). Why didn't Sullivan take that approach, instead of silly vacuities like guess-your-height observations about "Churchill freaks"?

Churchill freaks have raised $250,000 to sponsor publication of the remaining Churchill papers in the Official Biography. The result will be, as Simon Schama wrote in TNR, "history as total recall . . . for us to sift and sort, retain or dismiss as we see fit." Our Churchill Concordance, which Sullivan ridicules, will ensure that anyone who quotes Churchill does so accurately. I should think this would please those who decry the inaccurate Churchillisms of Ronald Reagan.

RICHARD M. LANGWORTH
*International Churchill Society*
*Contoocook, New Hampshire*

## NICARAGUA EPILOGUE

*To the editors:*
Robert Leiken omitted some crucial facts from "Nicaragua Cliffhanger" (December 14): (1) the Central American peace agreement does not endorse U.S. support for the *contras*—it forbids it; (2) in continuing to supply the *contras*, the United States is now in violation of the agreement; and (3) President Arias does not endorse *contra* aid; he stands foursquare against it. These facts contradict Leiken's conclusions. For example, defunding the *contras* would not "undermine Arias's authority"; it is the continuation of *contra* aid that undercuts Arias. Further, as Leiken argues, Ortega and Arias surely differ on how to bring peace, democracy, and development to Central America. But they do agree that the *contra* insurgency should stop. On this key point, the disagreement is between Arias and the Reagan administration.

There is only one way to reconcile support for *contra* aid with support for the Central American peace accord: hide some inconvenient facts.

PETER HAKIM
*Washington, D.C.*

## DIEM DETAILED

*To the editors:*
In reviewing *A Death in November* ("Carpe Diem," December 14), I failed to mention *Kennedy in Vietnam: A Prelude to War* by William J. Rust and the Editors of U.S. News Books, published in 1987 by Charles Scribner's Sons. This book provides the very in-depth discussion of the circumstances surrounding the overthrow and assassination of Ngo Dinh Diem that was lacking in Ellen Hammer's book. Mr. Rust interviewed the people who participated in these events, concentrating on the American policy-making process. The book deserves the attention of all serious students of American foreign policy, and I regret its omission from my review.

RICHARD HOLBROOKE
*New York, New York*



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THE NEW REPUBLIC
FEBRUARY 1, 1988

# EVENING IN AMERICA

If Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind* was the book of the year in 1987, this year's well could be *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* by Yale historian Paul Kennedy. Both books, significantly, are of the Something-Serious-Is-Wrong-With-Us genre. Their popularity is evidence that Ronald Reagan's mood of mindless euphoria is over. It isn't morning in America after all. It is late afternoon, nearing dusk, and the work isn't done. Bloom said it about American education. Kennedy is saying that the United States is overextended militarily, like other great powers of the past, and is in danger of sapping its economic strength and passing into decline.

The essence of Kennedy's case is that like Spain around 1600 and Britain around 1900, the United States now runs the risk of "imperial overstretch." Kennedy says that "decision-makers in Washington must face the awkward and enduring fact that the sum total of the United States' global interests and obligations is nowadays far larger than the country's power to defend them simultaneously." Like other great powers before it, he says, the United States faces the issue of whether it can balance its means and commitments and keep its economic and technological lead in the face of foreign competition.

Whether people acknowledge it or not, there is widespread worry about what Kennedy is talking about. It's evident in polls studied by Democratic public opinion expert Stanley Greenberg, who concludes that "the American public enters the 1988 election period . . . uncertain about our pre-eminence and strength. They are anxious that we are slipping economically." Greenberg says that Reagan achieved political success by addressing popular anxieties with a military buildup, but that the worry is back now, focused on deficits, productivity, and competitiveness, all of which are ripe for attack by a Democrat.

Democratic presidential candidates, in fact, are exploiting this issue. Richard Gephardt says that the next president must be as tough in negotiating with Japan and Europe as Ronald Reagan has been with the Russians; Paul Simon and Michael Dukakis argue that national strength consists of "more than military power, but economic strength," which they extend into the social welfare realm as well. Almost unanimously, the Democrats express hope that the United States can restore itself by reaching arms control agreements with Mikhail Gorbachev and diverting defense spending to internal uses. The differences among them lie in how tough they promise to be in the bargaining and how eager they are to dispense with existing U.S. commitments. On this score, Gary Hart is the ultimate New Age Democrat in assuming the best about Gorbachev and planning to abandon the Persian Gulf. Albert Gore is the most cautious.

Because homage must be paid to Reagan, Republicans don't acknowledge the validity of "imperial overstretch" in words, but some do in deeds. George Bush is nearly as avid an advocate of arms control as Dukakis. Even the Reagan administration has accepted Congress's demand for reduced defense budgets. Caspar Weinberger was allowed to complain about the cuts, but the White House was not interested in shutting down the government to block them. Now Defense Secretary Frank Carlucci is leading the charge for cuts, ordering the armed services to reduce their requests by $30 billion, down to $300 billion, which will be just 2.5 percent above this year's budget. Republican candidates such as Jack Kemp, Pierre du Pont, and Pat Robertson may argue against cuts and pledge to expand American commitments to freedom fighters, Star Wars, and Europe, but none of them is likely be nominated. Bob Dole, Bush's archrival for the nomination, is a budget-cutter.

So the makings are there for an epic and intelligent debate this election year on just *how* the United States can, as Kennedy says, "preserve a reasonable balance between the nation's perceived defense requirements and the means it possesses to maintain those commitments." Fuel for the discussion was added on January 11 in the form of a 67-page report by a bright-blue ribbon panel of 13 defense experts, including former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, former national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, Professors Samuel Huntington and Albert Wohlstetter, and retired Gens. Andrew Goodpaster and John Vessey. The group was bipartisan but emphatically orthodox—dedicated to finding ways to keep all of America's commitments intact, but doing so "more discriminately."

The panel put great store in high technology, advocating



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highly accurate "smart" shells and missiles, radar-proof "stealth" weaponry, drones, sensors, satellites and anti-satellite systems, communications intelligence, and limited strategic defense to deter the Soviets and even fight wars in the Third World. In an implicit slap at Weinberger, the report said the United States should stop spending vast sums on "large platforms" such as aircraft carriers and new airplanes, and instead devote itself in a carefully planned way to improving the weapons and guidance systems aboard the "platforms" we have.

In a controversial departure, the panel recommended a shift of attention and resources away from the "extreme contingencies" of all-out nuclear war and a Warsaw Pact attack on Central Europe and toward defense of the Persian Gulf and NATO's flanks in Norway and Turkey. Implicitly, the panel is calling on the Europeans to do more in their own defense, and (mischievously, we think) it raises questions anew whether the United States would be willing to escalate to strategic war with the Soviets if Europe were attacked. It said that arms control has a place in U.S. strategy—especially if the Soviets will agree to dismantle their tank armies threatening Europe—but should not be a substitute for strategy. It especially opposes the test bans often favored by American liberals, arguing they are necessary for technological advances.

This panel does not formally accept the proposition that America is imperially overextended, but it does acknowledge that the country can't do everything it presently aspires to, especially in Europe. It claims that America can afford six percent of GNP for defense, and that this is enough to allow the country to do what it must. We concur that six percent is affordable, but we question whether the

# THE ZEITGEIST CHECKLIST

BY CHARLES PAUL FREUND

| | This Week | Last Week | Weeks on Chart |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1. PLOWSHARES INTO SWORDS** | ↙ | 2 | 3 |

*Palestinians.* A dramatic shift in coverage of the West Bank and Gaza riots may be occurring: some reports now characterize the events as another Arab-Israeli "war." While this arises from a mechanical need to keep the story growing, the metaphor is a powerful one, and could alter the characterization of both sides. The Palestinians, as opposed to the PLO, are already said to have increased their legitimacy.

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| **2. BUSH WHACKED** | ↙ | * | 26 |

*1988.* The point in the Bush-Dole exchange is not the breaking of the "11th Commandment"; it is that Dole is doing a much more effective job of exploiting Iranamok politically than did Senator Inouye's Democrats. Bush's inability to defuse the issue, however much he attempts an offensive, is an early sign of the heavy Reagan baggage the Republican candidate will be carrying.

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| **3. AD HOC SHOP** | ↙ | * | 3 |

*Homelessness '88.* January's Siberian Express cold front was the apotheosis of the selling of the homeless. The homeless displaced all other weather-related concerns, even deaths. Indeed, they are the theme of senior class social projects everywhere. Still, the arm's-length tendency of all this is apparent; everything about it is ad hoc. Europe's media is headlining Europe's homeless this week.

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| **4. MONEY BALKS** | ↙ | 1 | 11 |

*Economy.* The Brady Crash report set a speed record for commission studies turning into doorstops. Chicago's margins may be brought nearer New York's, but the dismissal of any "circuit breaker" mechanism was near-unanimous. The developing angle on Wall Street is more interesting anyway: despite Wall Street's mythic status, its euphorias and crises are being "explained" by many as merely self-referential.

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| **5. STOP THE PRESSES** | ↙ | — | 1 |

*Murdoch vs. Kennedy.* How do you turn a pariah like Rupert Murdoch into a sympathetic figure? Force him to close a paper or two. Most of American public discourse is now based on what gets delivered in popular media. Maintaining a variety of such media has become a chronic public policy concern. Senator Kennedy's mid-night Murdoch maneuver has revived a (probably short-lived) debate on how often our anti-cross-ownership policy has backfired.

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| **6. VADE MECHAM** | ↙ | — | 1 |

*Governor Mecham.* Watching public figures writhe is a national pastime. Still, Mecham's self-inflicted torment is unusually fascinating; he seems not to have a clue where the mainstream is, even in Arizona. The groups he has offended—blacks, Jews, gays (a gay started the recall move)—are in the mainstream too. As for the indictment, it must have lost him even the used car dealers.

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| **7. SPILL MILKED** | ↙ | — | 1 |

*Oil spill.* What the Monongahela spill might have highlighted is how delicate the urban infrastructure has become; when the environment is spoiled, even temporarily, it requires heroic efforts to keep the social fabric intact. The stories were present individually, but the theme has yet to coalesce. This is the current state of environmental reportage in general; it's ubiquitous, yet the event that will make it central has yet to occur.

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| **8. BODY BUILDERS** | ↙ | — | 1 |

*Spare part babies.* Despite the mainstream penchant for scientific advance, many feel that using the organs of doomed babies, or the tissue of aborted fetuses, as a medical resource crosses the line. The Western embrace of science always had a flip side: a popular fear of science that remains visible in pulp horror and mad doctor movies. This increase in medical controversies fuels serious anti-technologists, a wing of the multimansioned New Age.

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| **9. CONFUSION ENHANCEMENT** | ↙ | — | 1 |

*'88 taxes.* There's no New Year's without IRS scare stories. Usually they play to the IRS's immense power, such as towing your car away with you in it. The point is to frighten you into owning up. This year the strategy is different: new rules are so daunting that even CPAs are sweating. If you don't get an early start, you face emotional distress yourself. The horror of the process is now worse than writing the check.

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| **10. DOWNSTAIRS DOWNSTAIRS** | ↙ | — | 1 |

*EastEnders.* Even *USA Today* hyped the appearance of "EastEnders" on PBS; being Britain's most popular TV show ever is no small endorsement. The test is whether PBS's Y-people audience will watch British TV when there's no upper class with which to identify. Chances are better that they're booking their *Phantom of the Opera* seats, or anticipating *Little Dorrit.*

*Item resurfaces in the Zeitgeist after at least one week's absence.



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price tag can be held to that if we're to buy what the panel is recommending: high-tech weapons, airlift for the Gulf, counterinsurgency programs in Central America, Third World security assistance, and anti-missile systems. However, with Paul Kennedy in one hand and the defense strategy panel's report in the other, the 1988 candidates have the grist for a vital debate about America's future as a great power.

## NOTEBOOK

□ "HOUSE SPEAKER JIM WRIGHT (D-Tex.)—who was patron of the [Arias] plan, organized the Democrats in support, and fought the White House every inch of the way—has gone home to Texas, weary, it is said, of warring Latins." So writes a disappointed Mary McGrory. How tiresome, these hot-blooded Latins. Some, Nicaragua's leaders, wearyingly insist on building a 600,000-man army, an idea that Humberto Ortega, had he bothered to check with Jim Wright, would have recognized as "preposterous," "outrageous and counterproductive." And, oh, the other Latins. The rebels show up for peace negotiations in Santo Domingo and find themselves across the table not from Sandinistas, but from a Washington lawyer and a West German Socialist sent to stand in for them. "The *contras*, professing a nationalism that could not brook talking about their country's affairs with foreigners, refused to meet them," writes the exasperated McGrory. We suggest that McGrory and Wright have suffered enough at the hands of these Latins. They deserve a rest. Time to leave Nicaragua to those, Sandinista and *contra*, who persist in believing that Nicaragua's civil war is a struggle for the soul of that country rather than a moral scoreboard for self-absorbed Americans.

□ IT'S NOT WHAT YOU DO, IT'S WHERE YOU DO IT:

**Israeli Soldier Kills Arab Woman**

—*Washington Post*, January 4, page 1

**'Massacre' in Brazil**

■ BRASILIA—State troopers rushed a group of protesting gold miners on a bridge in northern Brazil, shooting many of them at close range and forcing others to fall off the span in a "massacre" that left at least 100 people missing, a federal official charged.

Nelson Marabuto, director of a federal ministerial commission, accused police of trying to cover up Tuesday night's incident by hauling away bodies from the bridge in trucks before reporters were allowed into the area.

—*Washington Post*, January 3, page 27

A democracy expires.

# WHO'S KILLING HAITI?

A SHORT TWO YEARS ago, the White House had high hopes for Haiti. It was a textbook case of a "transition to democracy": an alliance between impoverished peasants and a liberal professional class toppled a military dictatorship, helped in part by the Roman Catholic Church and some prodding from Washington. There was to be an intermediate period of benign military rule, followed by free elections and continued economic aid. Philippines, the sequel.

This rosy scenario remained central to U.S. policy for the next two years, even while it became increasingly clear that what was really under way was a transition to another form of dictatorship. Only six months ago, the assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs, Elliott Abrams, spoke glowingly of the "path to democracy" in Haiti. He pointed out that "the government, the election commission, the political parties, the churches, and other responsible democratic bodies have all expressed a willingness to keep the process moving forward through dialogue and a spirit of common effort." Even as late as November, the administration was confident enough to send representatives to the island for election day, accompanied by several hundred other international observers. Just before polling day, they were briefed by the American Embassy in Port-au-Prince. As one participant remarked, "Nothing prepared us at that meeting for what was to happen." What happened was a bloodbath orchestrated by America's supposed allies, the provisional government.

What went wrong? It's not as if the administration did not foresee the difficulties. "I wouldn't say [the suspension of elections] took us by surprise," Abrams said afterward. "We were always aware of the dangers and never thought the election was a sure thing." Indeed, the State Department evidently was dubious of Henri Namphy all along, and for a while it took an appropriately firm line. Abrams said publicly in June that "some within the military and some representing the deposed clique seek to manipulate events in a way that would return Haiti to the feudal form of government [of] its Duvalier presidents-for-life." He threatened then, and again on July 9, to cut off U.S. aid if there was a "perversion of the democratic process."

Yet throughout last year, as it became evident that the Namphy regime's commitment to free elections was tentative at best, the administration was sending far softer signals. Despite the growing violence in Haiti, Abrams's July comments were the last major public statement that real strings were attached to continued U.S. aid. On July 23 the Tontons Macoutes organized a massacre that claimed some 225 lives; on July 29 troops fired on 2,500 civilians protesting the Tontons Macoutes, killing eight



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and wounding 15; on October 13 presidential candidate Yves Volel was assassinated by plainclothes policemen; and on November 3 the electoral commission's headquarters was firebombed.

AT NO POINT in this litany of atrocities was there a clear, high-level denunciation in Washington of the Haitian army's involvement and its growing complicity in the breakdown of law and order. On the contrary, in October Abrams actually abandoned his hard-line position. In *Time*, in a letter to the editor, he wrote: "While mistakes have been made, the CNG [the provisional government] has contributed importantly to laying the groundwork for a new, more democratic Haiti."

It is clear now that such a low-key strategy was disastrous. Stephen Horblitt, a Haitian expert and aide to Delegate Walter Fauntroy, argues that Namphy's maneuverings were part of a simple plan to test U.S. nerve: "The lack of clarity and commitment to back up what we wanted played a role in making the military believe they could get away with literally murder. They thought we'd back down, and they were right."

Abrams denies this, saying that he sent private messages making it "crystal clear" that the administration was serious. He defends his public statements that were supportive of Namphy: "A government official is an idiot if his attitude to a foreign government he's trying to persuade is permanent attack." And he believes the Namphy regime was planning on elections until the very last week, when fear of a radical victory in the elections prompted it to unleash the violence. According to this version of events, no U.S. pressure could have helped at this point: "You cannot ask a government to commit suicide to please the United States. We tried to persuade them that democracy wouldn't necessarily threaten them, but we failed."

But part of Namphy's confidence lay in the long-term support the State Department had given him, despite the fact that he was Duvalier's first choice for successor and that he remained intensely loyal to the armed forces. The military was involved from the very beginning in activities fatal to Haitian democracy. According to Americas Watch, as early as March 1986 seven civilians were shot dead and 19 beaten in a confrontation between a busload of civilians and an army captain; in April scores of unarmed civilians were killed by troops in a demonstration at Fort-Dimanche; abuses by the army, ranging from random seizure of land to arbitrary hostage-taking and killings continued throughout the year in the major cities. Gen. Williams Regala, minister of the interior and former head of Duvalier's secret police, reacted to the accusations by publicly announcing that there was nothing to investigate and that military actions were appropriate. A year later, with a mounting catalog of military offenses, the State Department argued that the army "has endeavored to prevent human rights abuses and corruption and has prosecuted a number of individuals. Freedom of speech and assembly are respected." Military aid was not "lethal, designed to suppress free expression of ideas and to nip democracy in the bud." Thanks to U.S. aid, the number of Haitian military troops jumped from 6,500 in 1986 to 22,000 today.

This quiet U.S. support for Namphy was combined with what appears to have been blind optimism at the ambassadorial level. An Americas Watch report last November documented conclusive evidence that the military was likely to wreck the elections. But the embassy continued to report until election eve that such a result was not inevitable, and indeed risked the lives of dozens of foreign journalists and observers on election day with that assumption. There's also evidence of amateurism. According to Alex Wilde, director of the Washington Office on Latin America, at the U.S. Embassy briefing before the election one official had not even heard of the Comité de Soutiens, the leading group of liberal, professional Haitians helping to organize the elections.

THE ADMINISTRATION'S initial reaction to this policy debacle has been one of damage control. The first major chance to pressure the Namphy regime was at a January 6 Barbados conference run by Caricom, the group representing English-speaking democracies in the region. The conference was due to affirm a package of tough sanctions against Haiti unless the January 17 elections were postponed and a free election scheduled. But the Caricom communiqué, thanks largely to U.S. administration point man Edward Seaga, prime minister of Jamaica, rejected sanctions and kept open the possibility of recognizing a Haitian regime that might emerge from the rigged election. Richard Holwill, deputy assistant secretary of state for the Caribbean, went to Barbados but failed to exert any pressure for action.

The White House has announced some sanctions—the end of $100 million in U.S. economic and military aid, the cutoff of some wheat supplies, and the withholding of some $50 million in IMF money—but its disavowal of further action has destroyed the chance of future leverage. Economic pressure is ruled out because of its effect on the population, and a Venezuelan fuel-oil embargo was derailed by Caricom. Abrams describes any form of trade embargo as "exceptionally stupid": "Do we want a war with the people of Haiti? Do we want to wreck the industrial sector? Those factories and that investment which has been building up over the last five years won't come back the day Haiti becomes a democracy." Abrams now favors a policy of increasing foreign investment in the country along with quiet pressure behind the scenes. Constructive engagement, Haitian-style.

All the while, there's been little discussion of the military options, despite the fact that the Haitian army, even with U.S. bolstering, is thought to be incapable of repelling a professional operation. It has never faced an external threat, is deeply divided, and relies on several key figures whose whereabouts are known to U.S. intelligence and whose influence can almost entirely account for the recent disturbances. One would have thought that a discreet military operation designed to detain ringlead-



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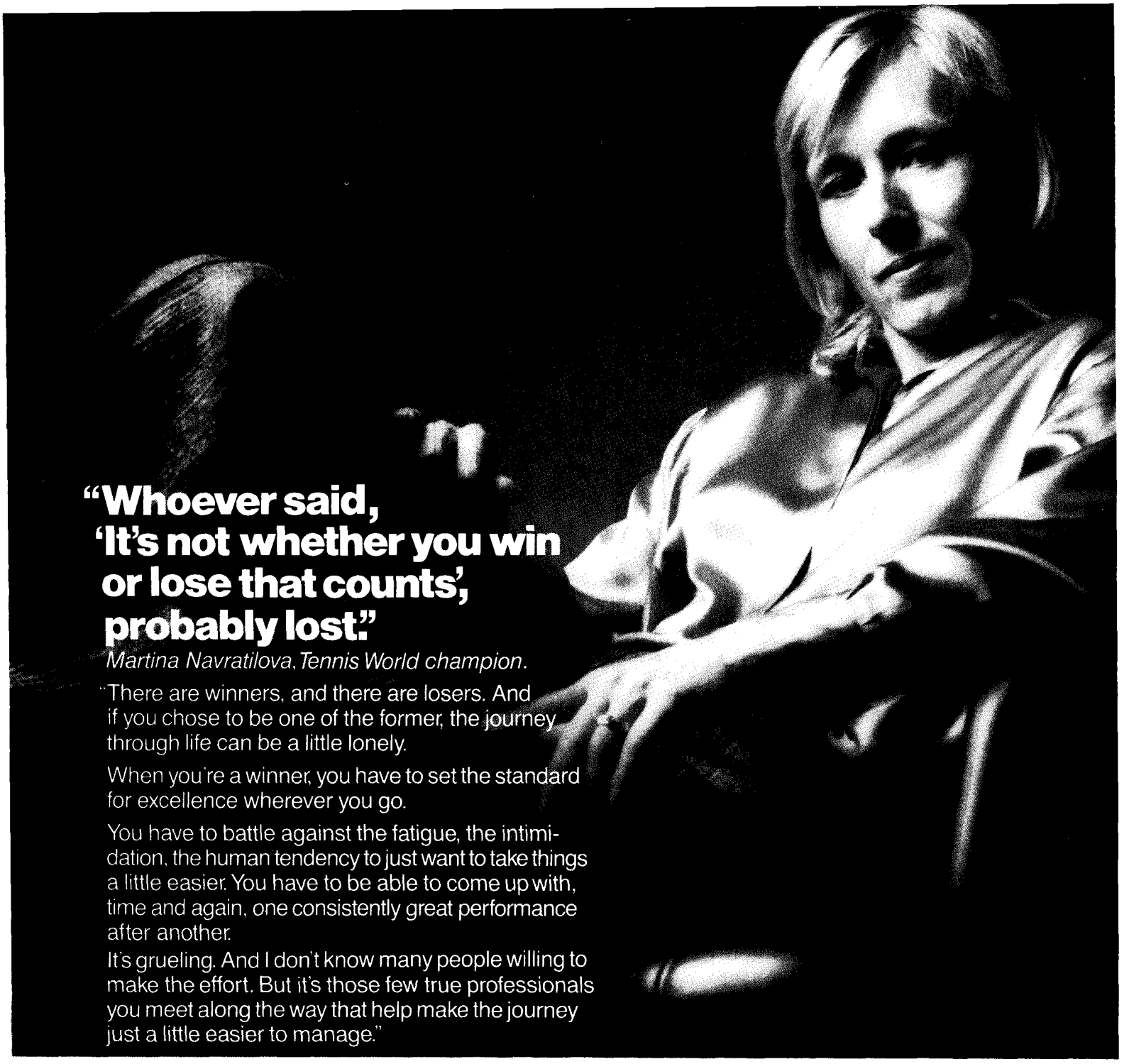

# "Whoever said, 'It's not whether you win or lose that counts', probably lost."

*Martina Navratilova, Tennis World champion.*

"There are winners, and there are losers. And if you chose to be one of the former, the journey through life can be a little lonely.

When you're a winner, you have to set the standard for excellence wherever you go.

You have to battle against the fatigue, the intimidation, the human tendency to just want to take things a little easier. You have to be able to come up with, time and again, one consistently great performance after another.

It's grueling. And I don't know many people willing to make the effort. But it's those few true professionals you meet along the way that help make the journey just a little easier to manage."

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ers, combined with an international peacekeeping force for the duration of elections, would at least have been considered by this of all administrations. Yet it was dismissed out of hand within hours of Namphy's coup. Abrams argues that even if a force could secure new elections, it would be difficult to leave a fragile civilian regime behind to face the military. "It doesn't take guts—in fact the amount of military risk is minimal. The real question is: Is it in American interests to occupy Haiti for another 20 years?"

Yet there's plenty of evidence that the Namphy regime is sensitive to public pressure from the United States. Abrams's July 9 statement threatening tough sanctions prompted a swift government retreat from its decree taking over the election from the electoral commission. Some tough gesture is certainly overdue now. One independent agency official suggests that a warship patrolling the coast could be enough to convince Namphy that the United States means business. On January 9 the Namphy regime showed that it still cares about world opinion when it made the cosmetic gesture of removing several Duvalierists from the electoral register.

But the administration isn't listening. Last Saturday, in a front-page story in the *New York Times*, State Department officials deliberately played down its chances of having any leverage at all. Now Abrams is all pragmatic resignation. The electoral commission is "a pretty disorganized group" and "a stable democracy in Haiti is difficult to achieve." In other words, when it requires a real effort to achieve democracy in a non-communist, impoverished country, this administration doesn't really give a damn.

**ANDREW SULLIVAN**

## CAMPAIGN '88

# YES, MR. PRESIDENT

VICE PRESIDENT George Bush says he was only along for the ride in Iranamok. Yes, he attended White House meetings on the overtures to Iran in 1985 and 1986, and yes, he supported the weapons sale. But no, he wasn't aware at the time that it was arms for hostages, and no, he didn't hear a thing about the diversion of money to the *contras* in Nicaragua. In his autobiography, *Look Forward*, Bush said he had some "misgivings" about the Iran initiative, mainly over the fact that the large role played by Israel meant the administration "had only limited control over how [the policy] was carried out." He expressed his qualms to President Reagan.

If only he'd known of the fierce opposition to the arms sale by Secretary of State George Shultz and Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, then things might have gone differently. "If I'd known that and asked the president to call a meeting of the [National Security Council], he might have seen the project in a different light, as a gamble doomed to fail," he writes. Actually Bush had hints of the Shultz-Weinberger opposition. But in a televised interview with David Frost last December, he said he "never really heard them that clearly." In any case, he didn't pursue the matter, and arms were sold. From Iranamok, Bush draws this lesson: "Don't look for shortcuts and don't try to circumvent the process. Most important of all, follow the rules."

Is Bush's story credible? I think so. It's more than believable. It's indicative of the way Bush has carried out his vice presidency. He sat through meetings and said practically nothing. At one point, he expressed an opinion—his "misgivings"—but this didn't prove to be pivotal in the White House decision-making. By all accounts, including his own, he was a largely passive figure. When the policy was adopted, he supported it faithfully. And when the policy became a scandal, the lesson he learned was predictably Bushian. He rued the day that rules were broken.

Bush is a rules fetishist. He thinks that if you stick to rules and procedures, if you follow the process, all will work out fine. In Bush's scheme, ideas and policies are less important. Fill a conference room with good people and they'll come up with good policies, so long as they abide by the rules. This is nearly the opposite of what Reagan believes. For him ideology is almost everything. Reagan wanted to be president to cut taxes, build up the military, ban abortion, etc. In Bush's closing statement in the Republican presidential debate in Des Moines on January 8, he declared, "I want to be the president because I believe in public service." That's the top rule for Bush—you serve.

When Bush arrived at the White House, he found a transformed vice presidency. Walter Mondale had made the job into something, and he offered Bush five rules for keeping it that way. Bush perked up. The rules were: he should have unfettered access to the president; he should have regular one-on-one meetings with him; he should get all the same paperwork; he should be informed of all the intelligence information that goes to the Oval Office; and he shouldn't get in disagreements with Cabinet members. Bush has followed these diligently, and he's also adopted Mondale's strategy of giving his advice to the president only in private and then keeping what he said confidential. Bush has a regular Thursday lunch with the president. Even the menu stays the same—tortilla chips and salsa, cheese soup or chili, sherbert. He never blabs. Both of Bush's chiefs of staff, Daniel Murphy in the first term and Craig Fuller now, say they've never gotten an inkling of what goes on during the lunches.

On top of Mondale's rules, Bush brought five of his own. The first is that the vice president should never, ever, overshadow the president. Bush is peerless at this. But it sharply limits his role and visibility, and it's made him an uninteresting politician. When Reagan was shot in 1981, Bush was so worried about appearing aggrandizing that he refused to have his helicopter land on the South Lawn of



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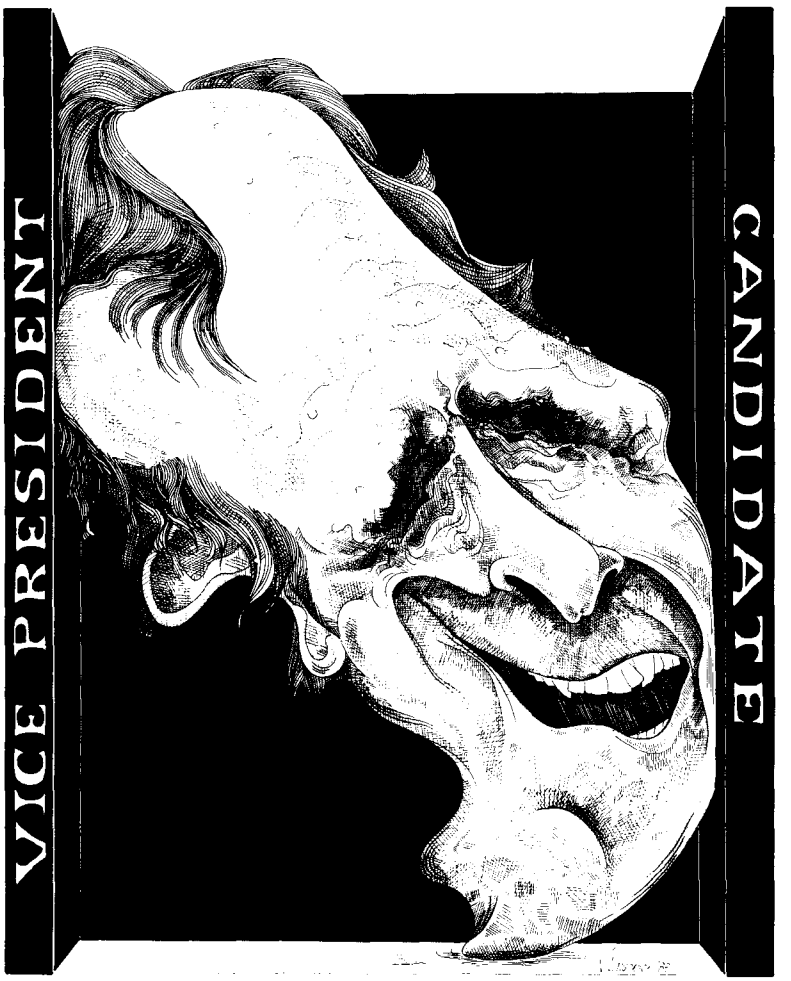
the White House. He didn't want anyone to think the situation was so grave that he had to take charge instantly. The second rule holds that a veep shouldn't "play the opportunist's game by putting distance between yourself and the president when some White House decision or policy becomes unpopular." Bush has honored this rule in Iranamok, which is admirable.

He does well, too, on his third rule—"don't play the news-leaking game." He calls his fourth the Stockman Rule. It says that all interviews should be on the record, "even interviews with friends, if you want to keep them as friends." And his fifth rule is that the vice president owes his boss, along with total loyalty, "his best judgment, whether he and the president agree or disagree." Bush, of course, says that he's done this. But there's no way of telling. He won't reveal what goes on during the private Reagan-Bush meetings, and the president isn't talking either.



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

I'm willing to take Bush's word that he's spoken his mind with Reagan. Even so, it doesn't seem to have made much difference. It didn't in Iranamok. White House officials say Bush prodded the president in 1983 and 1984 to start talking to the Soviets, but he was only a voice in a crowd. Reagan was getting the same advice from James Baker, Mike Deaver, and Nancy Reagan. On civil rights, Bush recommended in 1982 that the administration stop dawdling and back extension of the Voting Rights Act. The administration dawdled. This year Bush aides have raised the possibility that Reagan might endorse Bush's campaign proposal to make college savings tax deductible. No way, says a White House official. "I've never heard the president say the first thing about it."

Bush's impact has been felt when he's been assigned a specific task, but he's never stretched the limits of his assignment. One day in early 1982 four civic leaders from Miami met at the White House with Bush and told him that drug trafficking was ruining their city. Later that day Bush relayed the story to Reagan, who immediately named Bush the head of the South Florida Task Force. It coordinated law enforcement agencies and curbed the drug trade in South Florida. True, drug traffic picked up in other border states, but Murphy says the effort led to bigger drug busts because dealers "were driven out of their normal way of business." Anyway, Bush confined himself to the South Florida problem, and it wasn't until 1986 that the administration came up with a comprehensive anti-drug policy.

In Reagan's first term, Bush was deregulation czar. Again, he did the job, but no more. "He stuck with it," says Murphy, "until we practically ran out of administrative changes and the rest are going to have to be changes in the law." Did Bush then push for bold changes in the law? Not so you'd notice. In the second term, Bush was boss of the task force on terrorism. It reiterated the view that terrorist demands shouldn't be met. This task force obviously had no impact, since the administration was selling arms to Iran at the time. In his defense, Bush says he thought the arms were going to "moderates" in Iran and not for hostages.

Bush occasionally abandons his low profile. In 1985 Treasury Secretary Baker came up with a tax reform proposal that would have drastically reduced preferences benefiting the oil industry. Bush wanted to retain then-current law, and he argued this position in two meetings with the president. He was partly successful, as some preferences were restored. To this day Bush thinks the oil industry deserves greater tax incentives and higher prices. One reason for Bush's attitude is political. His political base is Texas, the heart of the oil patch. As he cranked up his presidential campaign in 1987, Bush has gotten interested in acid rain, an important issue in New Hampshire. When the issue comes up at a lunch or meeting, Bush jumps in, pressing Reagan to make good on his commitment to curb it. His interest in education and day care, both campaign issues, has blossomed as well.

Still, Bush is usually a wallflower at the White House. Last December chief of staff Howard Baker and communi-



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cations chief Tom Griscom decided it was time to get Senate GOP leader Bob Dole on record in support of the INF treaty. Baker raised the idea with Dole at a meeting, which Bush attended, and then gave Reagan a memo on the subject during a meeting at which Bush was present. Not a peep of complaint was heard from Bush. But when his campaign aides heard that Dole would appear with Reagan to endorse INF, they charged favoritism in the presidential race. Baker had to soothe Bush. Just as he'd missed the objections to the arms sale by Shultz and Weinberger, Bush said he hadn't gotten wind of the wooing of Dole. It wasn't so much that Reagan joined Dole at the press conference, Bush told a White House official. It was the way the thing was handled. The rules, after all, said he should have been informed.

FRED BARNES

Neo-Marxists face life.

# BACK TO LIPPMANN

IN POLAND 18 months ago, I sat with a young sociologist in a Kraków café. He told me about the "workers' universities" organized by Solidarity supporters—lawyers, professors, scientists, trade union leaders—in the basements of the city's churches. In these underground schools, workers were reading books as fast as they could be translated into Polish, so that they could prepare themselves for the distant possibility of a socialist democracy. Then he told me which authors were uppermost on the list: Robert Nozick, Friedrich von Hayek, and other authors of the libertarian and free market right.

For socialist democracy? I argued with him: Doesn't this simply bring you full circle? Private property brings the freewheeling, selfish dispensation of wealth. Are these not the very bases of the inequality and the oligarchy against which even socialism with a human face must fight?

My knee-jerk reaction came right out of American "progressivism," standard fare of social science in the United States. I found it more difficult to make this argument, however, in the shadow of the Soviet Leviathan. From this vantage point, Polish intellectuals have a markedly different perspective on what makes a democratic society. As many of them see it, the practical question about the distribution of modern power is less about fair shares than about whether there is a space for argument at all. Private property is the only means of having a sure political footing, a means of shutting out the state, of gaining a territory of one's own. Only private economic power can confront bureaucratized political control. Only large and powerful mass political parties can confront private economic power. Only independent churches can sustain alternatives to political ideology and provide bases for mobilizing outside of party and state. Only an educational system whose curriculum is controlled by independent intellectuals answerable to publicly elected officials can prevent religious or ideological domination from taking hold.

This insistence on pluralism contrasts with the abstract egalitarianism of so much "progressive" thought in the West. Throughout North America and Western Europe in the 1960s and '70s, neo-Marxist intellectuals condemned the "bourgeois" societies within which they lived. These societies were seen not as imperfectly pluralized orders but as centralized, homogenized behemoths. Comparisons with socialist societies could not be made, since real socialist societies still did not exist. Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union merely came under the category of "currently existing socialism," whose lessons did not include the paradoxes of central planning. Far from socialization of the means of production being a problem, in fact, the central neo-Marxist objection to the Russian experiment was that it had not been radical enough. The communists had lost their utopian aspirations because they had become mired in the economistic thinking of "industrial society" and the formalistic false consciousness of bureaucratic control. Political totalitarianism was not the issue. It was material greed that led to rigid discipline: the demand for high consumption forced the rule of efficiency and rationalization on productive life.

The Soviet Union was, therefore, not communist but "state capitalist." György Lukács and Herbert Marcuse, scions of neo-Marxist critical theory, and Louis Althusser, father of structural Marxism, taught an entire generation that mass consumption and formalism were illusions that history could avoid. A new world could be created that would develop entirely new laws of sociological motion. Mao's China was the very proof, its Cultural Revolution evidence that continuous, permanent mobilization could overcome stultification and create an engaged, communal society.

IN RETROSPECT, at least, it is a remarkable fact that the generation of the '60s and the neo-Marxist group it matured into understood nothing about Stalinism. A fantastic breakdown in Western political culture had occurred. Experiencing the shame of American racism and the immorality of the Vietnam War, young radicals were in no position to appreciate the fact that it was the very structure of American society that legitimized—indeed, encouraged—their critical anti-establishment attacks. The anti-Stalinist holdovers from the '50s—Trotskyists and "democratic socialists" alike—were of little help. Not only were they far removed from the youth culture that vitalized '60s dissent, their commitments to socialist thought made it impossible to defend the core of American society in an intellectually coherent way.

The younger generation was forced to learn the lessons of Stalinism all over again. First there was the impotent, frightening, and self-defeating authoritarianism of the New Left. Next came the brutal and deadly serious public revelations from Soviet dissidents. There followed the



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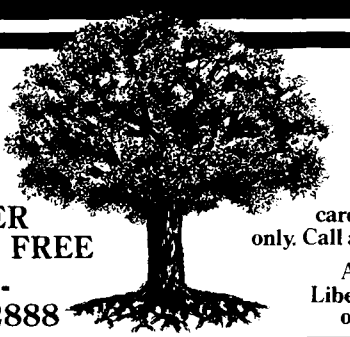

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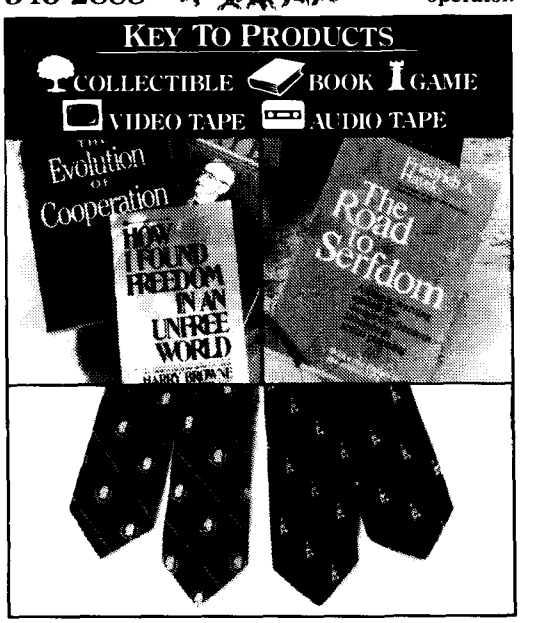


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genuinely democratic civics lesson of Watergate. The Chinese Cultural Revolution turned out to be a stage for manipulation and mass repression, Cambodia a ghoulish experiment in communist genocide, Vietnam a tired society that could only replicate the imperialism against which it had valiantly fought.

Marxist theory holds that class conflict is produced by capitalism and private property. In fact the greatest class conflict in the developed world in the last 20 years has been a trade union struggle that opposed not capitalism but the communist state. Neo-Marxists scorn democratic societies because they co-opt working-class demands through piecemeal reform and ideological hegemony. When Solidarity was crushed by military force, however, the crucial differences between force in the East and persuasion in the West were hard to avoid.

Yet neo-Marxist thinking has by no means disappeared from Western social science. "Postmodern" social theory revives such reasoning in a resigned and cynical mode. Michel Foucault collapses completely the distinction between the exercise of power and intellectual persuasion. Pierre Bourdieu, who holds the sociology chair at the College de France in Paris, claims that pursuing an education is less an effort to achieve rational enlightenment than an effort to amass cultural capital. For the neo-Marxist semiotician Jean Baudrillard, the texture and diversity of symbolic communication in Western society is an illusory web concealing mass manipulation.

STILL, even these myopic efforts at constructing a post-Marxist theory are indications that, after all, something has changed. Many '60s intellectuals, to use Daniel Bell's still appropriate phrase, have been thrice born. The persistently Stalinist character of the radical alternative to capitalist democracy has opened their eyes to the fallacy of using the term "bourgeois" entirely as a form of abuse; and they have not necessarily become neoconservatives for that.

In French Canada recently, I heard a heated argument between young intellectuals about whether Bourdieu should be dismissed because he cannot provide a principled basis for legitimating a democratic, if stratified, society. I met a noted theorist who had once been a devoted Marxist. With obvious relief, he recounted how he has taken up the pluralism and ambiguity of Max Weber. He has also returned to Judaism, confessing a deep distrust of any possible centralization of political power. Another neo-Marxist and one-time Althusserian noted the fading away of an international theory "collective" that put out a journal with the incongruous Anglo-German title *Kapitalistate*. Political sociology in the 1970s had not, he ruefully acknowledged, paid any attention to the Soviet state. In the 1980s critical political sociology is turning its attention to the "public," an abstract term for the space for open discussion free from political and economic coercion. Do you think, he ingenuously asked me, that the capitalist state actually allows "public opinion" to exist? It has taken 60 years for neo-Marxists to discover what Walter Lippmann took for granted.

The very notion of a "capitalist state," still widely accepted in social science discourse, manifests the unfortunate legacy of neo-Marxist thought. How can the state in America and England, or, indeed, in contemporary Germany or France, be called capitalist? Certainly it is located within a society that has a capitalist economy, but does this economy define the state in a decisive way? The Chilean state differs from these democratic states, yet it is similarly situated in a society with a capitalist economy. And what about South Africa, another "capitalist society" whose state is democratic for one race alone? What can one say, moreover, for those communist states that have introduced capitalist elements into their economies? Finally, how does the concept of a capitalist state cope with religion? Can we assume that capitalist states (or communist states, for that matter) will be ecumenical, or must we give to the religious dimension of states an autonomy too? The term is a misnomer, reflecting an assumption of economic control of politics that obscures more than it reveals. The American state is no more capitalist than it is democratic, relatively racially tolerant, and religiously ecumenical.

Throughout Western intellectual life these lessons are slowly being learned as the neo-Marxist intellectual legacy at last begins to disintegrate. It is a serious mistake to think of this shift as necessarily associated with Reaganism or with neoconservative, or even neoliberal, thought. To be skeptical of the denunciation of bourgeois society is not to believe less in equality, criticism, and social reform. What's still in doubt, though, is whether liberal intellectuals have the will and integrity to see that what replaces neo-Marxism can combine a more accurate view of capitalism and democracy with the humane and egalitarian thrust of the traditional left.

**JEFFREY C. ALEXANDER**

Jeffrey C. Alexander, professor of sociology at UCLA, is the author of *Theoretical Logic in Sociology* (University of California Press). This is the first in a series of articles by various contributors exploring future options for liberal political thought.

Has the Senate gone too far?

# COURTING RITUALS

EVEN IN the context of the Supreme Court tussles that have provided political entertainment since at least the 1930s, the 1987 saga of Robert Bork, Douglas Ginsburg, and Anthony Kennedy broke new ground. What made the play rougher this time was the heightened consciousness of the power stakes, a more aggressive deployment of the interest groups, and a greater sophistication in media use. If the overworked term "watershed" still conveys some



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meaning, it applies here to the future direction of confirmation politics. It is now evident that the crisis in the confirmation of judges will turn on the question of how much they will reveal under questioning about their future positions and thus how much of their judicial independence they will surrender.

In considering nominees for the swing seat of Justice Lewis Powell, Attorney General Ed Meese—guided by Assistant Attorney General William Bradford Reynolds—made the prime blunder of imagining that a symbolic strict constructionist and "original intent" champion such as Robert Bork could survive the confirmation process. (The seat taken by Antonin Scalia had not been a swing seat; it was previously occupied by Chief Justice Warren Burger.) It was a rash decision by a man who thought he could nail down an "original intent" Court majority until the century's end and beyond. Meese was especially blind to the intensity of feeling in the liberal law school culture about making a growing number of "rights" (including privacy) the centerpiece of constitutional concern, as against the Madisonian "balance" of freedoms and limits. And he was unprepared for the almost metaphysical passion that gave unity of purpose to a loose gaggle of interest groups concerned about the balance of power on the Court.

ONE CAN now see ironies in the whole performance. There was the irony of a liberal Senate and law school elite, committed to change and growth in constitutional interpretation but rigidly hostile to any similar change and growth in the constitutional journey of a legal thinker, denying evidence of it in his five years of decision-making on a high federal court. There was also the irony of Bork, eager to win the suffrage of marginal senators, earnestly answering their intrusive queries about his thinking—past and future—on case after case, doctrine after doctrine, thus giving legitimacy to a line of questioning that concentrated on his intellectual rather than his legal record. Traditionally the Senate's role has dealt with the nominee's character, possible conflict of interest, and flagrant bias. Clearly the questions to Bork went beyond this to his intellectual journey and future decision-making.

In retrospect, one need not mourn Bork overmuch. He lived by the constitutional sword in his grandly polemical articles, and in a sense he died by it—even running into the sword pointed at him by his enemies. He answered questions no nominee has any business answering if he means to be an independent judge.

But if the Bork story had saving ironies, the Ginsburg story had only absurdities. The Meese strategists, misreading the Bork disaster as due to his "paper trail" alone, too cleverly proposed Douglas Ginsburg, a young judge with no constitutional journey to speak of. This left the Democratic committee majority opposing him with only the traditional "fitness to serve" strategy—the "character issue."

Enter the investigative reporters. Ginsburg's life yielded some trifles (a conflict-of-interest cloud, a second wife who had worked clinically in a hospital that performed legal abortions), and then—as the final blow that shattered the confirmation—an obscure episode of marijuana smoking while on the law school faculty at Harvard. The scandalized single-issue protest groups were no longer the devotees of rights on the left but the champions of rigorous traditional values on the right. Coming of age in the exploratory early '70s, Ginsburg had violated the just-say-no command of codal purity. Exit Ginsburg, an innocent too rashly chosen to start with.

Anthony Kennedy came at just the right point in the drama—where both camps, exhausted by their wars in the first two acts, wanted a third with a happy ending. He has proved to be a "safe" candidate for both sides to support—the very model of a modern judicial nominee. There were no behavioral lapses in his youth or early manhood, no ethical cloud over his lobbyist years in Sacramento, no turbulent adventures in constitutional interpretation in some 400 judicial opinions. The Republicans are willing to settle for a "true conservative." The Democrats—including their Harvard Law School prime adviser, Professor Laurence Tribe—are fearful of their victor image of excessive nominee-bashing, and welcome the chance to show themselves as "moderates."

AT WHAT COST to the judicial culture and the nation? Where Robert Bork was eager to answer questions the committee had no right to put to a nominee, Anthony Kennedy was deftly evasive in most answers but crossed the line on some. Bork often gave involved and unsatisfying answers; Kennedy—more adroit in avoiding confrontation—managed to give soothing ones. Asked about his restricted membership club, he assured the senators he was "sensitive to the subtle barriers" of racism—a commitment that is bound to crop up in responses to his future decisions on "affirmative action" cases.

Harried by Senator Dennis DeConcini on the "right of privacy," Kennedy tried to skirt it by positing a line beyond which "the government may not go." But DeConcini would not be put off on his right-of-privacy query: "But it's there? No question about it?" Kennedy's defenses collapsed. "Yes, sir," he said. He thus gave away the treasure of a judge's own right of privacy and independence, and his future freedom of deliberative choice, all of which are central to the maintenance of a sturdy, knowledgeable, and independent judiciary. Questioned about his views on the meaning of the 14th Amendment, Kennedy simultaneously embraced historical intent (what the legislators "thought they were doing and intended and said when they ratified the Amendment") and added sweepingly that "*Plessy* v. *Ferguson* was wrong on the day it was decided" and that "a people can rise above its own injustice." His candy box has bonbons for every doctrinal taste.

What is going on in these questions and responses? It is, as I read it, nothing less than a movement toward plebiscitary control of the "advise and consent" process of judicial confirmation. The fact that it is enacted in a public hearing room and transmitted on a TV screen instantaneously around the world doesn't make it any less a form



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of political hostage-taking, under threat of an adverse senatorial vote.

This was not the way the historic judicial greats were chosen or confirmed. Whether they adhered to judicial restraint or activism, they would have met such questions and questioners with magisterial rebuffs. In their independence—from Holmes to Frankfurter and Jackson, from Black and Douglas to Brennan—they were models for many of the young in legal and judicial vocations. Under far lesser provocation than Bork or Kennedy, Felix Frankfurter, when pushed by a hostile senator about his associations and beliefs, responded more sharply than either of them. Bork slipped dangerously away from Frankfurter's example when he let Senator Arlen Specter pin him down on how he would interpret Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes's "clear and present danger" doctrine in future freedom-of-speech First Amendment cases.

The confirmation hearings of 1987 are bound to serve as precedents for future hearings on future nominees, perhaps irreversibly. This may haunt the Democrats when they come to power in this century. It will mean mischief unless the constitutional culture refuses to accept the prospect that no Supreme Court nominee will escape this kind of scrutiny. It is one thing to examine the life, character, and "fitness" of a nominee, provided it isn't pushed to absurdity. It is quite another for senators to extort commitments on a nominee's doctrinal positions and legal philosophy, which are either on public record for them to read or are in a zone of integrity and independence that no nominee should be asked to barter away in order to save his skin.

**MAX LERNER**

Max Lerner, a syndicated columnist, has completed a forthcoming collection of his Supreme Court essays from the past 50 years.

Israel's dilemma in Gaza.

# STRIP TEASE

THE BRITISH Foreign Office is a department of state without real power to harm enemies or influence friends. The decline of the empire removed its raison d'être and transformed it into a glorified trading mission. Probably not one Englishman in a hundred can recall the political non-entities who have presided over it since the war. Yet occasionally some ghostly exercise or attempted foreign policy echoes a long-lost chord that is not without morbid fascination.

The latest instance is the New Year's visit to the Gaza Strip by a junior Foreign Office minister named David Mellor. In the British political landscape, only an assiduous observer can find a trace of the man. He belongs to a new breed of Conservative members of Parliament whose careers consist of repeating word for word what their elders say.

In the Middle East diplomats have always said that rights for Israelis and rights for Arabs are incompatible, and one side can be satisfied only at the expense of the other. It is the Foreign Office's inherited wisdom that the Israelis in the Gaza Strip (and its twin, the West Bank) are depriving the local Palestinians of their rights, have no business to be doing so, and must evacuate. Once independent of Israel, the Palestinians are supposed to acquire a state of their own, the Arab-Israeli quarrel will cease, the Middle East will enjoy peace forever, and the Foreign Office will bask in glory. The Foreign Office Arabists will have briefed Mellor to repeat this logic of theirs.

Nobody has ever been able to give a satisfactory explanation of how Foreign Office Arabists came to believe in either-or logic and—more amazingly—to persist for a half century in fostering something so harmful and undemocratic. Some think that these diplomats have a collective love for the Arabs; others think that they have a collective hate for the Jews. The likeliest reason may well be that the Foreign Office has traditionally recruited from a narrow section of university graduates whose complaisant training does not prepare them to deal with the quite different values and system by which foreigners actually live.

IN THE early years of British involvement in Palestine, High Commissioners made repeated efforts to devise some constitutional structure that would integrate Arabs and Jews. Whether this was a practical possibility, or merely utopian, could not be discovered in the age of Hitler and Nazism. In the wider political context of the 1930s, Arabs and Jews became irreconcilable communities. As though this mutual separatism had been preordained, British officials became increasingly disheartened, and so attracted to the alternative of an either-or logic: that one side must win or the other surrender.

The proposal for partitioning Palestine into Arab and Jewish sectors, as advanced most notably in 1937 by the Peel Commission, carried the inbuilt admission that no constitutional structure could be devised to take into account both Arab and Jewish rights. After the Second World War, at a time when the future Junior Minister Mellor was shortly to be born, about 100,000 British soldiers were garrisoned in Palestine. The Sixth Airborne Division was in Gaza, fresh from defeating Nazism. Even such veterans in such numbers could not keep the peace as either-or logic reached an inevitably murderous climax in 1948, and Jews and Arabs alike fought for advantage.

Much to the surprise of the Foreign Office, the Jews achieved statehood while the Egyptians occupied Gaza and Jordan held the West Bank. Both of these rump remains of mandated Palestine stayed under military rule after 1948. Never viable on their own, the West Bank and Gaza were further swamped by thousands of refugees. Acknowledging the scale of the disaster, the United Nations and its agencies have ever since taken charge of feeding and hous-



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ing these refugees, now in their third and fourth generation.

Nasser's Egypt was particularly ruthless with the Gazans. Disturbance in Gaza, President Nasser feared, might be contagious in Egypt. Neither rehoused nor offered work nor allowed to travel or to emigrate except in the case of approved individuals, the Gazans were penned into a pitiable plight. Not only did they continue to be deprived of all rights, but worse, no means existed by which even the concept of right might be realized. No institutions, no representation at even the humblest levels, no voluntary associations, no free press, nothing organized even in the sense of Boy Scouts or a football team. Gazans lived as their forefathers had done long ago, in family and tribal groupings, engaged in subsistence agriculture and neighborhood commerce.

We have no way of knowing what they might have wanted. Living as they did, they could find no possible means for breaking out of their traditions and customs and acquiring whatever other social or political structure might allow them to come to terms with Egypt, Israel, or the whole modern world in general. If Gazans were to make their opinions known, their only hope was to gather in a mob and go rioting and stone-throwing. From time to time they did so, bringing upon themselves repression by the Egyptian secret police and army, who were the arbiters of the fate of everyone.

THE GAZA STRIP is 28 miles long, and about five miles in width. Israel's occupation of this minuscule corner of land was almost bloodless, one of several consequences of the 1967 war that nobody could have anticipated. At once a contest opened for the population's allegiance. The Israelis did what they could to secure a quiet life; the Palestine Liberation Organization did what it could to stimulate a mass movement of revolt. It is unclear how much support the PLO mustered. The most evident sign of its failure was the campaign to intimidate those who might have another opinion, and occasionally, to make an example by murdering them.

In 1969 and 1970, 76 West Bankers and Gazans were killed by the PLO and 1,122 were injured. In the same period there were only a handful of Israeli casualties. On some mornings, Israeli patrols discovered the corpses of those killed by the PLO and hung up on meat hooks in Gaza markets. Gen. Ariel Sharon put a stop to such horrors by the use of what might be called Nasserist methods, surrounding refugee camps such as Jabaliya with tanks, bulldozing roads straight through them, arresting and screening hundreds of suspects. Since then there have been no organized resistances, although an occasional Israeli or tourist is stabbed or shot from behind in an individual incident of terrorism.

In practice, a start has been made in refuting either-or logic. Every day about 50,000 Gazans cross the border to work in Israel. This is the Strip's economic lifeline. A single road runs from the border in the north to Rafah and Khan Yunis in the south, busy with buses and service taxis for the workers and donkey carts for the farmers. Behind hedges and prickly cactus are intensively cultivated fields, the orange groves that are the sole natural source of wealth, a few palm trees. Tracks lead to the villages and refugee camps, which are by now indistinguishable. With 600,000 people, the Strip contains one of the densest populations in the world. Everyone seems to be watching what everyone else is doing, and there can be no secrets.

Gaza City itself has a central square with a landmark of a clock tower, a mosque, a flea-bitten hotel, the offices of the municipality and of the Israeli administration. Over the years I have sat in those offices or in nearby stone villas and listened to the Gaza notables, like Mayor Rashad Shawa and others, and to the Israelis, some civilian, some military, many eager, a few gray and defeated. They all speak of building an infrastructure. The Shifa Hospital, docks and warehouses, schools and municipal services, and housing schemes have been variously conceived and implemented within the limits of the budget. The struggling Gazans can be inventive given the chance. They have developed a specialty of making and selling fake French furniture with ormolu and inlay in the style admired in the Middle East and nicknamed Farouk Quinze.

Now as previously, the missing element is rights. There were no constitutional rights for anyone in Nasser's Egypt (or in Jordan, or anywhere in the Arab world for that matter), so there could be none in Gaza either. Simply and unilaterally to return these people to some Arab ruler is only to maintain them in a position without rights. Constitutional rights alone, under guarantee of law, could smash the either-or logic, in an ideal world placing Gazans on the same footing as Israelis, whether equal and together or, more probably, equal and separate.

As things stand, Israel has no title to be granting rights to Gazans or any Palestinians. To incorporate or annex these areas and their inhabitants might convey such title, but no Israeli government would wish upon itself so unpopular and suicidal a task, nor would the Israeli electorate stand for it. In the continuing absence of rights, of any means by which representation and association is possible, Gazans still have to resort to mobs and riots in order to obtain a hearing. It is doubtful whether they are demonstrating against Israel in particular or for the PLO or any other Arab or Islamic body. Their violence, such as it is, is akin to a popular petition in a democracy, a statement that they are present and have a proper case.

THIS WILL certainly continue until such time as constitutionality replaces the traditional order. The choice currently facing any Israeli government is stark: either to stay and enforce law and order at whatever cost to themselves and the Gazans, or to pull out and surrender the population to anarchy or to tyranny. Just like the Israeli government, world opinion does not care to inspect this choice in its ugly detail—but world opinion can go hang. Meanwhile, there are the ignorant sneers and slander of those who have not the least idea of what it means to live in a place where murder is loose in the land.

"Something must be done," says Junior Minister Mellor



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in time-honored words, after spending a few hours on a guided tour of Gaza. Britain's aid to developing countries is among the lowest in the industrial world, and Mellor was apparently not thinking of a useful contribution to the budget for enlarging the infrastructure. Judged by an article in the London *Daily Telegraph* on January 11 written in self-justification immediately upon his return, he seems to have no idea of the Foreign Office role in setting the two communities against each other, or of British police methods once used on the spot where he spoke those words. The deeds in Gaza of the Sixth Airborne Division and those of Nasser's secret police also gave him no cause for thought. To a startled Israeli colonel apparently engaged in policing some stone-throwers, he added, "This is not good. Not good at all." This was enough for headlines about the junior minister to circle the globe. Even the smallest crack at Israel will do wonders for a career.

Where and how, one asks on this minister's behalf, are the Israelis to begin remaking the family and tribal order so that a Palestinian electorate can emerge instead? Are the Israelis merely to hand Gaza (and, indeed, the West Bank) to Egypt and Jordan respectively, or even to the PLO? Since the British decided in the days of the mandate that no constitutional arrangement would hold for Jews and Arabs, perhaps the junior minister would spell out exactly what is this "something" that must now be done by the Israelis? Does he have in mind Ulster, where either-or logic between Catholics and Protestants has gone to a violence far greater than what is to be found in Gaza? In the light of experience, the Foreign Office might at last realize that its advice is better withheld. Silence has the merit of dignity.

**DAVID PRYCE-JONES**

David Pryce-Jones has just finished *The Complete Circle: Interpretation of the Arabs*, to be published by Pocket Books.

Third World debtors and a cure for Reaganomics.

# GIVE THEM A BREAK

## BY RICHARD ROTHSTEIN

AMERICANS ARE PUZZLED by the self-righteous demands of Third World nations to be released from legitimate debt obligations. We want to sympathize with the world's less fortunate, but can't help feeling that even the poor shouldn't borrow money they can't repay.

Yet letting Third World debtors at least partially off the hook would benefit the U.S. economy as much as the economies of debtor nations. The loss of booming Latin American markets for U.S. exports since the onset of the debt crisis in 1982 is the principal cause of the U.S. trade imbalance. The recent bond deal struck with Mexico is far too cautious. Latin America needs a lot more help than that.

In November, at a meeting in Acapulco, leaders of Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Peru, Panama, Colombia, Venezuela, and Uruguay called for partial cancellation of the $40 billion Latin American debt, and reduction of interest on the remainder to less than market rates (President Raúl Alfonsín of Argentina asks for a four percent cap). The Latin American Eight insist that any repayments to U.S. banks should not come from debtor nation treasuries: rather, money to repay banks should be lent to debtors by the banks themselves. Indeed, Brazil resumed payments only after banks promised a new $3 billion loan to cover interest on $68 billion in old commercial debt. The World Bank recently approved a new loan to Chile, to be used solely to pay interest on old loans.

According to Peruvian president Alan Garcia, "Each of us has the right . . . to not pay more than what its economy can pay. . . . That is the moral law of the debtors." Regardless of the amount due, Peru states it will repay to foreigners no more than ten percent of its annual export earnings. The chairman of Mexico's Senate Finance Committee suggests that the limit should be five percent of gross domestic product. Argentina is threatening to declare a total moratorium on repayment of its $35 billion in foreign bank debt. "We're moving toward a confrontation," observed Argentina's treasury secretary, Mario Brodersohn.

The confrontation won't be avoided by the Mexican bond deal, announced recently by the U.S. Treasury and Morgan Guaranty Trust. Incredibly, Treasury Secretary James Baker has persuaded Mexico to *lend* the United States $2 billion at below-market rates. After 20 years, Mexico will get its money back, plus interest (a total of $10 billion), provided it makes good on its own loan repayments to banks. If not, Mexico's balloon payment from the U.S. Treasury will be turned over to the banks. Either way, the United States is at no risk. We got our money up front. That's the "creative" part of the deal. Mexico may reduce its annual debt payments by $900 million, paying higher

Richard Rothstein is on the staff of the Organizing Institute in Monterey, California, and a visiting fellow at the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies at the University of California, San Diego.



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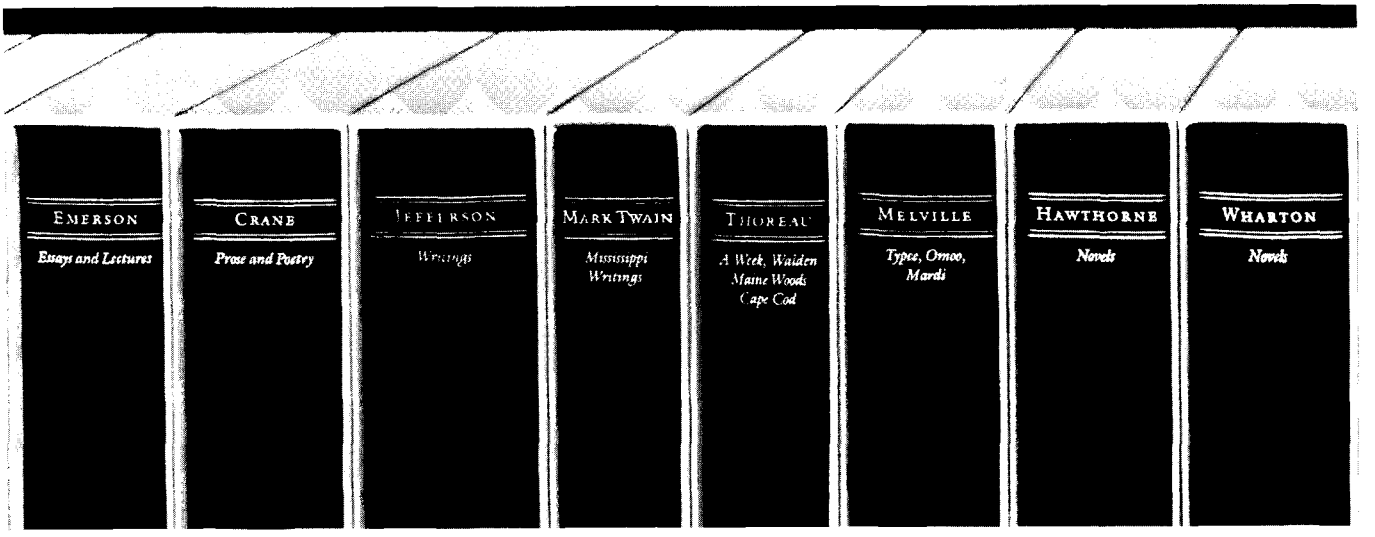


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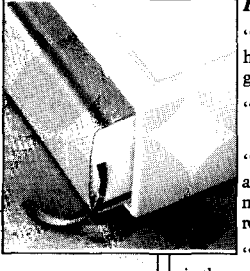

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rates to bankers but on reduced principal. But the new bank interest rate isn't guaranteed and will fluctuate with the market. If U.S. rates increase, Mexico's savings will disappear. Mexico will hold a debt auction in March. Bankers offering to forgive the most debt will be awarded the U.S. Treasury bond balloon as security for the remainder.

OUR OWN prosperity may depend on our ability to abandon the temptation to treat debtor nations as character-defective paupers. Analogies between individual responsibility and international economic rules can't work. One reason is the role of currency exchange rates.

The United States is the world's biggest debtor, owing more than $250 billion to governments and investors in Japan, Germany, Canada, and Taiwan, among other places. This debt, equal to the combined debt of the three largest Latin American debtors (Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina), includes funds borrowed from foreigners with the sale of Treasury bonds to pay for public spending and the sale of corporate bonds to pay for investment, and a $165 billion annual excess of imports over exports.

Foreigners have been willing to continue lending us new money. But as our debt increases, our international credit rating weakens. This would normally force us to raise interest rates: the worse our credit rating, the more interest we must promise to borrow new funds. Higher interest rates, in turn, can lead to recession as businesses and homeowners find it too expensive to borrow for new construction and other economic activity. A recession would also reduce our purchase of imports, and the need to borrow foreign funds to pay for them.

The administration tried to avoid raising interest rates by pressuring Japan and Germany to consume more. Fewer Japanese and German products would then be available for export. The Japanese and Germans might import U.S. products to satisfy growing domestic demand. So Baker has been begging these prosperous nations, in public and in private, to expand their domestic purchasing power by lowering interest and tax rates and increasing public expenditures.

The Germans and Japanese have responded, but with half-measures. The Germans fear that such policies would be inflationary (and, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, worry that too much prosperity will attract Turkish immigrants). The Japanese have become successful by 30 years of self-sacrifice to produce exports and fear if they now indulge in too much consumption they risk losing it all.

Baker in turn canceled U.S. foreign debt by the indirect mechanism of encouraging a fall in the value of the dollar. Like the Acapulco Eight, we have resolved that if we can't get the voluntary cooperation of our major creditors, we will unilaterally refuse to repay what we owe. And we have demanded creditors' assistance in our debt cancellation.

The United States didn't make a blunt, Acapulco-like announcement. But with the reluctant cooperation of the Japanese and German governments, we have permitted the demand for, and thus the price of, dollars to decline. A dollar that two-and-a-half years ago could be exchanged for 260 yen now gets only 130; marks sold at 3.4 to the dollar and now are at 1.7. Halving exchange rates creates greater debt cancellation than the Latin Americans dare dream of; we are telling Japanese and German creditors that we intend to repay only half of what they lent. Take it or leave it.

Latin Americans have more difficulty repudiating debts because their currencies, unlike the dollar, are not a medium of international trade. When the United States sold bonds to Japanese investors, we borrowed not yen but dollars, earned by Japan from selling things to the United States. This debt in our own currency can be canceled by devaluing dollars. Funds Brazil borrowed were not in cruzados, but in the *creditor's* currency: dollars, yen, or marks. Brazil cannot walk away from its debt by printing more cruzados to reduce their value—this only makes debt repayment more difficult because dollars needed for repayment become more expensive.

Nor has the dollar's recent fall in world currency markets helped. Dollars are now cheaper only if you have marks or yen with which to buy them. If you hold pesos or cruzados, dollars are no less expensive, because these currencies have also declined in the market. Not having power to manipulate world currencies in their own interest, Latin Americans must beg for debt forgiveness from U.S., Japanese, and European bankers. Such pleas are no more a mark of profligacy than the fall of the dollar in Japanese and European currency markets.

NATIONAL INDEBTEDNESS also differs from individual bankruptcy in that powerful creditor nations can change the rules under which debt was originally contracted. In 1979, hoping for re-election, President Carter attempted to reduce domestic inflation. Paul Volcker was appointed to head the Federal Reserve system. His chief anti-inflation weapon was increased interest rates to slow down economic activity and increase unemployment, reducing demand for goods and forcing down prices. These policies, continued under President Reagan, controlled domestic inflation. They also forced Latin American debtors into near-bankruptcy, because about three-fourths of Latin American debt is structured like variable rate mortgages, with monthly interest percentages tied to fluctuations in the U.S. prime rate (or to a similar London interbank rate). Loans taken out at four percent interest in the early 1970s now had to be repaid at 15- to 20-percent rates. Much of today's $400 billion Latin American debt is not original principal, but the compounding of inflated interest rates.

Other U.S. domestic policies influenced Latin debt. Some loans were made on the assumption that Argentina, with plentiful exports of beef and grain, was an excellent credit risk. Neither lending officers nor the Argentineans foresaw that the foreign and farm policies of creditor nations would create huge agricultural surpluses, subsidizing farmers to grow more than world markets could absorb. The Argentine debt crisis is one consequence of the post-Afghan invasion grain embargo: U.S. grain grown for the



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Soviets was dumped on the world market. Last year the Reagan administration spent $23 billion on farm programs, $12 billion of which went to the U.S. corn crop alone. The European Economic Community spent $31 billion to subsidize European agriculture, mainly grain. The result: plummeting prices for Argentine beef and grain, and Argentina's inability to earn dollars for debt repayment. A worldwide drop in commodity prices of 27 percent since 1980, engineered by the very nations to which debt is owed, has thrown dozens of primary producing nations into default.

Mexico's crisis was exacerbated by Middle East politics. Up to 75 percent of Mexico's foreign revenues have come from oil sales. In the 1970s loans to Mexico were based on expectation of repayment from oil revenues, which then exceeded $30 a barrel. By 1986 the price fell to $10. In 1988 oil prices are again likely to fall as low as $15, partly because Iran and Iraq attempt to outproduce each other even if market glut results. Mexican solvency is a casualty, though Mexico was not consulted when creditor nations decided to fuel the Iran-Iraq war with weapons sales to each side and a "hands-off" United Nations policy.

POLICY-MAKERS are trapped by "commonsense" fallacies about the sanctity of debt. Baker orchestrated an international plan to devalue U.S. foreign debt by the dollar's fall, yet he blithely proclaimed a "non-starter" Brazil's demand that banks sell debts at market value, using the proceeds to purchase cruzados. "Brazil's problem should be addressed in a conventional way," Baker asserted.

For the United States, this is self-destructive. Brazil has a $10 billion annual trade surplus generated by a desperate push to export shoes, radios, tape recorders, and steel. These Brazilian industries, mostly labor-intensive, have destroyed thousands of U.S. jobs that could not compete with cheap imports. Until February, when it suspended foreign debt service, Brazil's strategy had been a single-minded attempt to earn dollars for loan repayment. Neither U.S. workers, whose jobs have been destroyed, nor Brazilian workers, whose wages cannot keep pace with a scarcity-induced 300 percent inflation rate, have benefited from such a strategy.

But if a reasonable portion of Brazil's debt were canceled, its $10 billion annual trade surplus could be used for Brazilian investment and to purchase U.S. and Brazilian products—expanding job opportunities for Americans to provide services, capital, and consumer goods for the Brazilian economy, thus increasing both nations' living standards. Our recent trade dispute with Brazil is a case in point. It makes little sense to insist that Brazil buy Microsoft computer programs when we also demand that every available Brazilian dollar be used for debt repayment.

Brazil is not unique. In 1986 Mexico had $4.5 billion more merchandise exports than imports. Argentina's merchandise trade surplus was $3.5 billion. Peru's was $5 million. By eliminating social services and food subsidies, slashing real wage rates, and increasing taxes, Latin American governments have lowered real personal incomes by over ten percent in the last five years. They have cut living standards to reduce import purchases and permit specialization in low-wage export industries to earn dollars for debt repayment. As a result, U.S. merchandise exports to Latin America fell from $43 billion in 1981 to $30 billion in 1986. This represents 55 percent of the U.S. worldwide export decline in this period. According to the U.S. Commerce Department, "Latin America had been one of the fastest growing markets for U.S. exports before the onset of the debt crisis. . . . [I]n not one Latin American country have [U.S. exports] returned to their level of [1981]." Each billion dollars of Latin American trade surplus represents 24,000 manufacturing jobs lost in the United States.

FAILURE TO distinguish between the morality of private and international debt has helped bring us to ruin before. Following World War I, England and France were deeply in debt to the United States for wartime military assistance. The Versailles Peace Conference then imposed a reparations burden of $33 billion on Germany, to be paid to Allied nations for pensions to soldiers and widows and for indemnification of villagers whose property German armies destroyed. These were justifiable obligations. The United States had sent material aid to England and France, based on promises to repay. German armies maimed soldiers and destroyed French livestock, for which the French felt entitled to compensation.

But the validity of international obligations must be based more on practical economic effects than on moral rectitude. In the 1920s how could the German economy resume purchases of U.S. products if it had to transfer millions of dollars each year to England and France? Where could England and France find principal and interest payments for the United States if Germany defaulted on reparations?

U.S. policy machinations in the 1920s previewed today's Latin American crisis. In 1921 Woodrow Wilson vetoed a tariff bill, not on grounds of economic efficiency, but arguing that U.S. policy should encourage European imports because these nations needed earnings to pay war debts to the United States.

In 1924 U.S. budget director Charles Dawes persuaded banks to increase lending to England, France, and Germany. Nearly $3 billion in new European loans over the next four years did not go for productive investment, but enabled these nations to return the money as payment on foreign debt. For this scheme to rescue Europe from default, Dawes was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Despite the Dawes Plan (and a "Young Plan," with more new loans for interest payments, negotiated four years later), the European debt crisis became more severe. President Hoover, declaring debt cancellation immoral, offered in 1929 to exchange England's debt to the United States for Bermuda, British Honduras, and Trinidad.

John Maynard Keynes was one of the first to recognize that debt repayment was self-defeating. A member of the British diplomatic delegation to the Versailles Peace Con-



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ference, Keynes resigned to protest unworkable debt and reparations treaty agreements. In *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, published in 1920, Keynes predicted that a need to earn foreign exchange for repayment would force European debtors, Germany in particular, to unbalanced production of exports. "Germany has in effect engaged herself to hand over to the Allies the whole of her surplus production in perpetuity," Keynes wrote. "By aiming at the destruction of the economic life of Germany, [the Versailles Treaty] threatens the health and prosperity of the Allies themselves."

But Presidents Wilson and Hoover, Secretary of State Henry Stimson, and other American leaders denounced the debt "cancellationists" as immoral. European exports grew, American jobs were lost, and a trade war and the Smoot-Hawley tariff followed. The refusal of American leaders to cancel European debts and reparations was one of the contributing causes of the Great Depression.

IT SHOULD NOT fall to Miguel de la Madrid or José Sarney to demand debt cancellation. It is as much in our interest as in theirs. Even when a portion of the $23 billion squirreled away yearly for debt service is returned to U.S. banks in interest payments, its benefit is questionable: in the 1980s U.S. bank deposits were as likely to be lent for speculative as productive activity.

Wholesale debt cancellation need not destroy U.S. banks or seriously damage our financial system. Although total Third World indebtedness is enormous ($1.2 trillion), banks have little chance to collect much of it in any event. Banks now hold Latin America to unrealistic debt obligations largely to comply with regulatory, tax, and accounting rule requirements. Lending Brazil new funds so it can pay interest on the old returns no real wealth to the banks; it simply avoids classifying Brazilian loans as "non-performing" and permits banks to pay stockholder dividends if profits are otherwise available. Legislation could easily correct this, permitting banks to conduct a one-time removal of Third World loans from their books.

When the Bank of Boston declared a loss of 20 percent of its Latin American loan portfolio, it reaped substantial tax advantages because it had realized a $61 million profit for the first nine months of 1987. Less profitable banks, outside the booming New England economy, cannot so easily walk away from Latin American debt. But Congress could provide tax advantages for them that would enable them to relieve Latin nations from their repayment burdens.

In 1933 Franklin Roosevelt assumed the presidency with a similar international debt crisis. Latin American debt, half as great as Europe's, was rapidly defaulting. Roosevelt negotiated a new Brazilian debt agreement that gave priority for debt payments to U.S. exporters over bondholders. The Export-Import Bank was established to make new loans, not for old interest but to finance new purchases of U.S. manufactured goods.

Today, instead of swapping old debt for new debt, the U.S. Treasury could finance a swap of debt for credits to purchase U.S.-manufactured capital goods. Congress could also give banks other options. Banks are already permitted to take charitable tax deductions for selling Third World debt at a discount to non-profit corporations. These non-profit groups then trade debt for local currency to fund their development or relief programs in the debtor nation. Tax breaks could also be applied to interest rate reductions, debt-equity swaps, and other concessions demanded by the Acapulco Eight.

Even if the Treasury purchased debt with taxpayer funds, it could be well worth the price. If only half of Latin American trade surplus dollars were spent on U.S. products, 200,000 American manufacturing jobs would be created. This would generate approximately $6.5 billion annually in new government revenues and welfare savings to pay for the debt purchase. This $6.5 billion is not much less than banks could realistically expect in interest payments if Latin American debt were maintained.

Such policy could be conditional. Congress could permit the Treasury to purchase, and then write off, debt only for those nations that reduced or eliminated their trade surplus with the United States. Or interest payments on debt could be forgiven only in those years that a nation imported U.S. products to balance its exports, assuring that debt relief would directly create American jobs.

U.S. ECONOMIC POLICY rhetoric is today focused on stimulation of the world economy, expecting that overseas growth will create demand for U.S. products and will absorb foreign production that might otherwise be exported to the United States. We demand that Bonn speed up tax cuts so that German consumers will have more disposable income. We insist that Tokyo tax savings accounts so that workers will have to spend more earnings. We support wage aspirations of Korean workers, which translate into less competitive Korean exports and increased Korean consumption of American products. But "administration policies for managing the [Latin American] debt crisis . . . are tantamount to telling debtor nations that they must promise to continue paying interest and stop purchasing U.S. products," as a Democratic staff report for the Joint Economic Committee put it last year.

The most obvious source of potential consumption is the Third World. Brazil has 140 million potential consumers of U.S. products, more than Japan and over twice the population of Germany. On our border, Mexico has 80 million potential consumers, a market more accessible to American manufacturers than Korea or Taiwan. After Peruvian president Garcia unilaterally slashed foreign debt payments in 1985, Peru's annual merchandise export surplus dropped from $1.1 billion to $5 million. The overall U.S. trade balance with Peru improved by $400 million, creating or preserving some 10,000 U.S. manufacturing jobs.

Latin American nations not only have markets for American goods, they have funds ready to use, if only we can release them from their debt burden and let them spend. □



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Most of all, they sought dignity. They wanted to be treated like human beings, not like part of their plants' machinery. They wanted courtesies most Americans take for granted—such as time to go to the bathroom and doors on bathroom stalls.

Catfish workers are like many others in today's economy who are looking to the UFCW to help them out of the trap of poverty which is compounded by a lack of benefits most Americans receive from their employers. Hispanic poultry workers in the Sacramento Valley and their black counterparts on Maryland's Eastern Shore and nursing home workers in Birmingham, Alabama and around the country are just some of the low-paid workers who've become members of the UFCW in search of a better future.

Often, the hard labor of these workers is further demeaned by oppressive employer policies, reinforced by reactionary community attitudes and complicated by language and cultural barriers.

The UFCW is proud of its organizing record throughout North America, but we take special pride in bringing the benefits of union membership to the lowest paid and most oppressed workers in our society.

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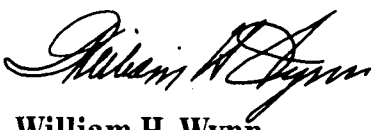

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# STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

## Something of Values

*Terms of Endearment*, which James L. Brooks directed in 1983 from his adaptation of a Larry McMurtry novel, was attacked by some as a bourgeois film. Ostensibly this was because it dealt with bourgeois people and satirized only personal foibles, not their class. Now comes *Broadcast News*, which Brooks directed from an original screenplay of his. So far as I know, no one has called it a bourgeois film, presumably because it deals with hip, fast-forward people, not plump suburbanites. But basically it seems to me much more bourgeois than *Terms*.

*Broadcast News*
(20th Century-Fox)

*September*
(Orion)

The glitz and hustle of the TV world take the new film out of the earlier one's chintzy, neat-lawn environment. This is precisely what makes it more indictable. The people in *Terms* lived in a more or less enclosed society and coped with what came along in terms of that society. But the leading characters in the new film, although shown to be of bourgeois origins, are now part of a smart set distanced from those origins, are privy to the trimmings and betrayals of bourgeois culture. Yet they, like the earlier set of characters, thrive happily in a world that (Robert Lowell's phrase) "everywhere . . . slides by on grease." These people seem to set their own limits to their perceptions.

That said, I emphasize that there's a great deal to enjoy in *Broadcast News*. The dialogue is shrewd, so bright that it almost visibly glistens as it races past. The story is well-built. It concerns three people, two male newscasters and a female producer in the Washington studios of a TV network—the friendships among all three, their career maneuverings, and the amorous moves and countermoves between the woman and the two men. All three are interesting. William Hurt, at his least-mannered best, plays a Midwestern sports announcer who gets boosted to Washington newscaster, which gratifies his ambition but emphasizes his lack of intellect and education. Albert Brooks (no relation to the director), who has written and directed some sly comedies of his own, is endearing as a witty newscaster who can see everything clearly but himself. Holly Hunter, zesty—though not very sexy—in a role suited to Debra Winger, plays a woman feistily competent to manage her TV job and her life, except that occasionally she cries when alone.

Brooks (James L.) avoids the *Wall Street* snare. He explores a métier without being swamped by it because he explores through the beings of three well-realized individuals. The crises and quarrels and triumphs are vivid because they are personal. (As in *Terms*, there's one egregious sequence. In the earlier film, it was a campus fight between a husband and wife. Here it's a farcical scurry with an urgently needed tape.) When a 25 percent staff cutback comes along, it's more than a blunt statistic: it hurts because we know something about most of the people involved.

In the cutback sequences, and in other sequences, Jack Nicholson, playing a network anchor star (though unstarred in the film's credits), glides through like a smug basilisk. Every role, right down the line, is cast so as to show that Brooks had a sharp idea about the person and found the right actor to intensify the idea.

His directing here doesn't have cameo moments like the brief summerhouse scene between Nicholson and Shirley MacLaine in *Terms*, but the slapstick sequence aside, his work is authoritative, fluent. However, he has made a film that starts out as one creature and ends up as another. It seems at first that *Broadcast News* is going to be a commentary, perhaps a critique, perhaps even a satire, on TV news—a phenomenon so powerful in our country that its effect is retroactive. It makes us think that the events of the day have *happened* in one- to three-minute segments and that all those events are linear, allowing for quick salutes to depth. Yet Brooks's three TV people turn out to be part of the society for which they select, cagily arrange, and "punch up" the news. (Their term.) The only person in the whole film who has some overview and reservation is the Albert Brooks character, and he takes his one real ethical jab only after he loses his chance to get to the top of the network heap.

Does it show prejudice to expect a film about TV news to be critical of it? To me, criticism seems inseparable from this choice of setting. To accept the setting as simply one out of a thousand possibilities, without the imperative of criticism, is to accept the limitations of TV news itself. In *Terms* the prevailing views were those of the characters. In *Broadcast News* the views are again those of the characters, but this time they seem arbitrarily limited. We assume that these high fliers will have some sense of their boundaries—at least some awareness that their primary function is show business, not journalism. (The success of the Hurt character—a mediocrity who happens to be telegenic—underscores this.) But their high flying doesn't give

### FILMS WORTH SEEING

*The Dead*. Anjelica Huston's fine performance comes closest to fulfilling her father's film (his last) of Joyce's story. The rest is respectful but somewhat remote. (Reviewed 12/21/87)

*House of Games*. Deceit as American ethos is the theme of David Mamet's exceptional script, which he directed. A seemingly realistic but teasingly abstract work. (11/16/87)

*Housekeeping*. Bill Forsyth, the Scottish director, has dealt magically with Marilynne Robinson's American novel. Giant spirits of the frontier hover above this modern comedy-drama. Christine Lahti excels. (1/18/88)

*Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*. And London's inner city gets flayed. A cascade of irony, comedy, sex, racial animus, and compassion. Made by the director and the writer of *My Beautiful Laundrette*. (11/30/87)

**SK**



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them the perception of themselves and their profession that we expect.

Thus the new film is more cozily snuggled within bourgeois values than the earlier one because its more worldly characters knowingly subscribe to those values. The best proof of this comes toward the end. Hunter discovers that a news story of Hurt's, for which he was praised and raised, contains an ex post facto shot, perfectly apt but inserted later. She is furious. He shrugs it off. She is then so angry that she refuses to go away with him for a week as they had planned. To me, the insertion seemed no more objectionable than the garden-variety hyping of TV news. ("Senator, would you mind coming in again and shaking hands with the mayor on this side?") But it's mightily important to Hunter, so important that she completely changes her future personal life—and Hurt's—because of it. And the result of this flare-up in professional terms? None. In an epilogue seven years later, she and Hurt and Albert Brooks, all quite successful in their differing TV ways, are perfectly chummy. The ethical matter, so horrendous as to alter personal lives, is professionally forgotten. It had been raised only as a momentary sop to conscience, and has long since slid by on grease.

Within its fur-lined perimeter, *Broadcast News* is highly amusing. But its cleverness has no bite—worse, is not meant to have any. Like the caustic comedies of George S. Kaufman and Neil Simon, it is finally part of its own subject matter.

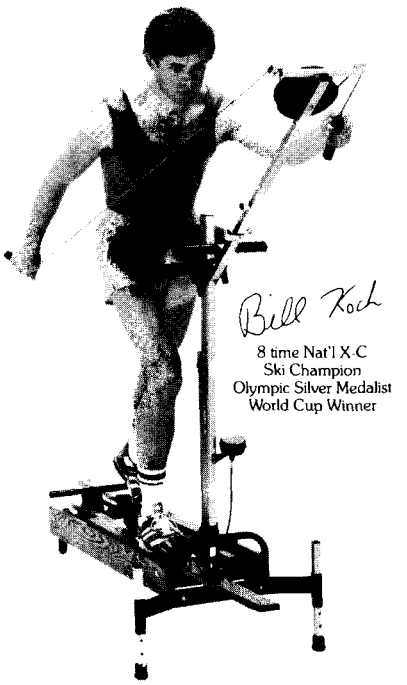
*September* is one of Woody Allen's serious mistakes—or "serious" mistakes. This time he has made the Lanford Wilson error. Like the playwright, he thinks that if you pen up a family in a house with some of their friends, keep them there a time, and give each one a problem, the result is Chekhov. The story of *September* is not worth sketching, the problems not worth detailing. Of the cast, the only ones notable are Mia Farrow, who tries to find a heart in her role and work outward, and the ever-admirable Denholm Elliott, whom even this script cannot shake. The total result is sad, not for the characters but for Allen, who wants so badly to vary his comedies with grave work. Never mind the chestnut about comedians wanting to play Hamlet: I note only a couple of telltale instances. In none of his comedies has Allen written a line like "We all make mistakes" or—when a telephone rings—"Who can that be?"

# ROBERT BRUSTEIN ON THEATER

## Designs For Living (Rooms)

It may seem curious that the first book-length study by *New York Times* drama critic Frank Rich should concern not a playwright, not an actor, not a director, not an overview of the New York stage, but rather a stage designer, Boris Aronson. Nevertheless, his handsomely illustrated coffee-table volume, *The Theatre Art of Boris Aronson* (Knopf, 322 pp., $75), written in consultation with Aronson's widow, Lisa, who supervised the visuals, is valuable not only for celebrating the career of one of America's greatest theater artists, but also for elevating the art of scenic design to its rightful place in the theatrical pantheon. Quoting generously from Aronson's writings and interviews, and interspersing cogent commentary on the designer's production history with innumerable color plates and photographs of his most inventive renderings, Rich positions his subject high on a ladder of the Broadway theater he served so reputably throughout most of his career.

And served so sourly. His attitude toward Broadway was always adversarial. Trained in the theatricalist tradition of the radical Russian director Vsevolod Meyerhold, deeply influenced by Modernist art, and stimulated by the visionary designs of Gordon Craig and Adolphe Appia, Aronson—arriving here in the '20s from the Soviet Union after a brief stay in Berlin—found little to admire in the mundane domestic realism that still dominates the commercial American stage. "Every production was *Life With Father*, or mother—or the uncles," he growled in his famous curmudgeon manner—"plays about relatives" more appropriate to television or radio. "I've done so many kitchens, I don't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know how to do them anymore unless it's James Joyce's kitchen," he said, on turning down a Gertrude Berg vehicle called *A Majority of One*, where, he crabbily concluded, "the whole Jewish problem is solved because she could make gefilte fish for a Japanese fellow."

THE BROADWAY theater responded with its own suspiciousness toward this foreigner who scorned its values, the rival Lee Simonson calling his design style "an exotic and transplanted thing," full of "Russian dogmas" that inadequately reflect "the current realities of the American stage." Nevertheless, Aronson, like other theatrical émigrés of the time, soon fell into lockstep with the demands of the job market. After a brief stint designing Constructivist settings for the Yiddish theater, he began doing living rooms for the Group Theatre (Odets's *Awake and Sing* and *Paradise Lost*) and, in what the author calls his "Broadway breakthrough," for a variety of commercial plays and musicals, including *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Detective Story*, *Bus Stop*, *South Pacific*, and *A Loss of Roses*.

None of these designs was ever less than masterly, but—as typified in his magnificent setting (perhaps his masterpiece) for Archibald MacLeish's *J.B.*—they were usually for projects inferior to his talents, as if Picasso had been commissioned to decorate a lobby on West End Avenue. Only twice did he design a classic, the last being Olivier's *Coriolanus* at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford, where, finally exposed to the benefits of the subsidized repertory system, he professed himself "flabbergasted ... that there is such a thing as working without the pressures, without all the difficulties, without the deadlines."

It was not until the mid-'60s, when Aronson began collaborating on the "concept" musicals associated with the names of Harold Prince and Stephen Sondheim—*Cabaret*, *Company*, *A Little Night Music*, *Follies*—that he was able to escape the tasteless parlors of American drama and create sets equal to his epic imagination. Clearly, the nonrepresentational style and fluid staging of the musical appealed to his nonrealistic tastes, and, just as clearly, Rich believes it was through these open-stage opportunities that Aronson finally achieved creative fulfillment. The book does not record Aronson's opinions of Broadway musicals, which I bet were just as jaundiced as his views of Broadway producers, audiences, and theater people. (We do know that he admired *Fiddler on the Roof*, which, as a disciple of Marc Chagall, he uncharacteristically petitioned to design.)

To the end, Aronson remained a much more acid critic of the commercial theater than were those who reviewed his productions. In fact, if this gracefully written book raises a question, it is not about the exhaustive treatment of its remarkable subject. Rather, it is why Aronson's artistic values have not rubbed off more visibly on Rich's own critical aesthetic, which, in my opinion, is often armored against the truly innovative, imaginative, questing voices in our midst today, though open enough to those conventional "plays about relatives" shouted out in those hideous kitchens and box-set living rooms that Aronson despised.

WHERE ARONSON made his greatest impact, I believe, was not on Broadway but on the set designers who followed him, most of them working in an American version of that sensible theater system he admired so much at Stratford. Ming Cho Lee, a gifted scenic artist who served an early apprenticeship with Aronson, is living testimony to the "range and possibility of theater expression" he said this relationship opened up for him. And when Lee succeeded Donald Oenslager as design teacher at the Yale School of Drama, he went on to develop, with his associate Michael Yeargan, a string of talented, visionary designers whose artistry, variety, and commitment make them the unsung heroes of the contemporary American stage.

Some, like Tony Straiges, the current designer of Sondheim's concept musicals, work primarily on Broadway; others, like Santo Loquasto, who designs for Woody Allen, have turned to film. But the majority—among them Douglas Stein, Adrienne Lobel, John Conklin, Karen Schulz, Kate Edmunds, David Gropman, John Lee Beatty, Zack Brown, Eugene Lee, Andrew Jackness, and Tom Lynch, not to mention the prolific Yeargan himself, who designs all over the world—are primarily associated with resident or off-Broadway theaters, or opera companies. These, along with such non-Yale trained designers as Robin Wagner, Robert Israel, Loy Arcenas, John Arnone, David Mitchell, Douglas Schmidt, George Tsypin, and countless others, form a cadre of theater artists that makes Aronson look less like a lonely dissenting influence on the American stage than the leader of a national movement.

I AM SURELY not alone in my belief that such theater designers are among a director's most cherished colleagues, not just because they help to realize an interpretation of a play, but because they help to formulate it. Design in the Aronson tradition is organic rather than decorative. Rather than functioning as environmental background for the action, an illusionistic enclosure for dialogue and gesture, the Aronsonian setting—like the circus universe for *J.B.*—is essentially a metaphor that encapsulates the poetic kernel of the production without hiding the instrumentalities of the stage.

Today's most interesting stage directors try to realize a dramatic concept not just histrionically, through the actors, but visually, through the very tissue of the scenic surround, which at its best changes and develops very much like another character in the play. It is for this reason that so many conceptual directors are forming permanent relationships with designers: JoAnne Akalaitis and Douglas Stein, Andrei Serban and Michael Yeargan, Peter Sellers and Adrienne Lobel, Martha Clarke and Robert Israel. The ideas they evolve are symbiotic, with the designer assuming as much responsibility for the directional interpretation as the director does for the design. In the case of artists such as Liviu Ciulei or Robert Wilson or Richard Foreman, the director is usually his own designer, and the symbiosis is complete.

In my own experience, designers have proved to be not only among the most creative figures in the theater, but also among the most intelligent and broad-ranging. Not many American actors are devoted to reading, and fewer like to read plays. But when designers accept an assignment, they are trained to devour anything even remotely related to the work being produced. Their prodigious research embraces not only visual artifacts—paintings, architecture, and photographs of the era—but also literary and scholarly references, including stage history, other plays, novels, sociology, politics, and philosophy. They are well-educated, intellectually curious, and generous-minded. And being self-effacing, they have the tact to push the director deeper and deeper into the possibilities of the text.

*The Theatre Art of Boris Aronson* is especially valuable in documenting a great



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designer's questing, probing, inquisitive spirit when working on a play. Among others, Harold Prince gives testimony to Aronson's "crazy tenacity and impatience with compromise and second-rateness. . . . He could poison me—he would make me no longer accept [the production compromises] that I'd planned to accept. He could make me pick the scab off when I'd been quite content to leave it there and go on with life." Discussions with Aronson could begin as early as two years before the musical was mounted, the designer encouraging the director to "say damn foolish things," to "free associate." Prince and Aronson would talk about "characters, period, philosophy, the play in relation to its times, to these times. How were the politics of the time reflected in art? The mores? . . . The research is endless."

When performed on great plays, such investigation is arguably more deliberate and more penetrating than that done by the most rigorous scholars in the silence of their studies because it is conducted collaboratively, word by word, by intelligences that are simultaneously analytic and artistic. It is certainly more satisfying than literary research because discovery is invariably followed by a creative act. Not every designer is, like Aronson, the conscience of a production, but most of them play a considerably more important part in its evolution and development than is ever credited. In their Aronson-like revolt against the artistic limitations of the living room, they have opened up the imaginations of audiences to theater that is mysterious, dreamlike, and spiritual. Playwrights, actors, directors, and producers are the most conspicuous figures on the American stage and receive the lion's share of attention. But when the lights go up on a play, you are entering a designer's world, and it is the designer's images that implant themselves indelibly on the edges of your mind.

The bad apples of the Big Apple.

# THE TRIUMPH OF TRUMPERY

## BY LOUIS MENAND

"WHILE I CAN'T honestly say I need an 80-foot-long living room," observes Donald Trump of his triplex apartment in Trump Tower on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan, "I do get a kick out of having one."

The distinctive thing about this kind of appetite is its contempt for sufficiency. What is enough is precisely what is not enough: how much better to have nothing than to have merely what you need. But appetites are mediated emotions—they learn what is worth having by seeing what others have—and are therefore permanently vulnerable. Though he may feel that he has successfully outstripped his needs today, Trump must live in dread of the appearance tomorrow of the man with the 90-foot living room.

This is a funny kind of pathos, like the pathos of King Midas, but it is the darkness in the glitz of Trump's autobiography, and in the glimmer of contemporary Manhattan. New York has always been a supermarket for every appetite; New York in the '80s has started to look like a specialty store for those appetites that can be satisfied only with things.

Almost nothing about Donald Trump, apart from the magnitude of his ambition and the fact that it expresses itself in real estate, seems to evoke Manhattan. He is an alien from the outer boroughs, the big spender with the sports fan's vocabulary and the wrong haircut. Sophistication, the quality Manhattanites plume themselves on, is the quality he most despises. *His* idea of excess is a suit that's cut just a little too well. But there are a few qualities that make Trump a representative man of his town and his time: he consumes aggressively and conspicuously, he understands the value of self-promotion, he is contemptuous of those who are unsuccessful.

*Trump: The Art of the Deal*
by Donald J. Trump with Tony Schwartz
(Random House, 246 pp., $19.95)

*A Cannibal in Manhattan*
by Tama Janowitz
(Crown, 287 pp., $17.95)

*New York Confidential: The Lowdown on the Big Town*
by Sharon Churcher
(Crown, 300 pp., $18.95)

*City Slickers*
by William E. Geist
(Times Books, 363 pp., $16.95)

*New York 1930: Architecture and Urbanism Between the Two World Wars*
by Robert A. M. Stern, Gregory Gilmartin, and Thomas Mellins
(Rizzoli, 847 pp., $75)

The tale of Trump's triumph—the triumph of Trumpery—is well known by now, for its hero is not shy of publicity. Trump's father, Fred, was a winner in the hard business of building and managing low- and middle-income housing in Queens, Brooklyn, and Staten Island. Donald learned development at his father's side—reluctantly taking time off to get an undergraduate degree at the Wharton School—and then set out, with an Oedipal design that could not be more obvious and that is one of the genuinely touching things in his story, to do what Fred could not do: build the Big Building in the Big Town.

Trump's strategy was two-pronged. He went after property that was too vexed for others to pursue. And—not yet 30 and with nothing to show for himself (the rap on Trump in those days was that he was all talk; now many people would gladly settle for the talk)—he hired Howard Rubenstein, one of the most successful public relations experts in the city, and began beating the drums. He has been pounding away ever since.

*Trump: The Art of the Deal* (fresh drumroll, please) is more forthcoming about the first wing of the Trump attack than it is about the second. The reason goes to the dark heart of Trumpery: the book is itself a craftily designed piece of public relations. That a businessman should thus use himself as a sales gimmick is hardly a crime against literature. But *The Art of the Deal* does deserve at least a warning label.

Still, the story of Trump's progress—told, to be sure, as the unfolding of a



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manifest destiny, and with absolute deference to the instinctive genius of the Deal-maker himself—is unquestionably compelling. Tony Schwartz, a media critic now at *New York* magazine, has crafted an attractive style of braggadocio for his employer—one that preserves the loudness of the Trump voice and the thrilling simplicity of the Trump philosophy, but that mutes the bullying, schoolyard quality that comes through in press conferences and television interviews.

Trump is a real estate garbageman. He can smell opportunity in distress. His recreational reading in college, he tells us, was the listings of Federal Housing Authority foreclosures. And all his big deals—the Grand Hyatt, Trump Tower, the Atlantic City casinos—were put together from properties other people had to get rid of. When Trump made his move to Manhattan in the mid-'70s, the market was scraping the bottom. The city's illness was Trump's leverage.

People were willing to listen to Trump because nobody else was calling. He sought out one of the sickest patients in the city, the bankrupt Penn Central, struck up a friendship with the people in charge of selling off the assets, and started buying options on its properties. These included the West Side railyards at 34th Street (Trump eventually convinced the city to purchase the land for a convention center, picking up a broker's fee of about $800,000); the West Side yards at 60th Street (this is the land Trump finally purchased in 1984 for Television City); and the Commodore Hotel on 42nd Street, next to Grand Central Station.

The Commodore deal is the locus classicus of the Trump method. It was in a sense the Ur-deal for the '80s as well, the deal that showed how government and private enterprise might work hand in hand to create more luxury accommodations than the city could possibly need or its indigenous population possibly afford. In 1974 the Commodore was a deliciously distressed parcel. It belonged to a bankrupt corporation; it owed $6 million in back taxes; it was losing $4.6 million a year with an occupancy rate of 33 percent. Trump agreed to purchase an option on the property for $250,000 from Penn Central, which, having just thrown $2 million into a fruitless renovation, was on the verge of closing the hotel.

Trump had a few problems, though. He was 27 years old. He didn't have a quarter of a million dollars he could afford to part with; he knew nothing about hotels; and he had never built a thing in Manhattan. He had to keep Penn Central committed to the option without actually putting any money down (he instructed his lawyers to stall) while he tried to convince a bank that he could develop property in an area most people had given up for dead. He hired an architect—Der Scutt, who eventually designed Trump Tower—to make drawings on a characteristically grandiose scale. And he got the Hyatt organization to agree to manage the facility. But he still needed not only $10 million to buy and $90 million to renovate; he needed $250,000 to purchase the option.

In 1975 rescue came in the form of the Business Investment Incentive Policy, the city's offer of tax relief for new development. Trump was first in line, and he asked, as he puts it, "for the world"—an agreement that, boiled down, meant that in its first 40 years he would pay, on a graduated scale, property taxes on the hotel at a rate based on the property's assessed value *in 1975*. He got what he asked for. By the time the hotel opened as the Grand Hyatt in 1980, the city's economy had turned around, and so had property values in midtown. It has been estimated that the tax abatement Trump received was worth $100 million.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Among the details of the way Trump orchestrated his pitches to Penn Central, the city, and the banks and contrived to pit each player against the others—all without committing a single dollar of his own to the property—one stands out. During negotiations over the "incentive," the city's Board of Estimate asked to see Trump's completed option agreement with Penn Central. Trump didn't have a completed option agreement, of course, since he didn't have any financing. So he sent along a copy with only his signature on it. Nobody noticed.

In his short career, Trump has turned a lot of tin that people were eager to be relieved of into some very expensive tinsel. The obvious question is whether buying real estate in New York and New Jersey in the '70s and converting it into cash-flow businesses in the '80s wasn't shooting fish in a barrel. A lot of people made money that way; Trump just shot at the biggest fish. Trump was supposed to be worth $3 billion before the market and the dollar started convulsing. But who wants to be in luxury housing and gambling when times go bad?



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"When bad times come," Trump told Barbara Walters recently, "I'll get what I want." But he has to do some fast positioning, because the tide that carried him to his fortune is turning, and the very publicity that helped lift him up has started to weigh him down. This is where *The Art of the Deal* makes its interesting contribution to the Trump image.

Trump has always understood that it is crucial in New York to make as big a noise as possible—and that (so long as you have a Teflon ego) it doesn't matter whether the response is good or bad. "Even a critical story, which may be hurtful personally, can be very valuable to your business," he confides in the book. Thus the fanfare about "the world's tallest building": it attracts attention, and hence prospective tenants, and it makes a colorful bargaining chip, to be cashed later on down the line for community board approval and for zoning and tax concessions. But the flamboyant lifestyle—the 80-foot living room, the 118-room Palm Beach mansion, the yacht that once belonged to Adnan Khashoggi—is not good advertising for a man in search of a tax abatement. Not in times when Mandevillean virtues such as greed are supposed to be going back into the closet.

*THE ART OF THE DEAL* tries to change the picture somewhat. It skates quickly over the big houses (the 45-room "weekend" mansion in Greenwich, for example, is not mentioned) and the expensive toys—all the stuff of "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous" profiles. It ignores Trump's contributions to the foreign policy debate—his offers to negotiate an arms control treaty a few years ago and his more recent exhortations about making Japan pay for its own defense. It is even modest about certain of the Trump acquirements; you would never know, for instance, from the disparaging things said here about academic credentials, that Trump graduated first in his class at Wharton. But the book is not the portrait of a man and his work. It's much too smart for that. It is a weapon in the continuing public relations war that is Donald Trump's way of doing business.

Today the enemy is city hall. The message the drum beats out over and over is that Trump didn't *take* all the things he owns; they were handed to him on a platter by a shortsighted and incompetent city government. "Competence" is the book's buzzword. It is worked into every sentiment. (My favorite: "There is nothing to compare with family if they happen to be competent.") The Wollman Rink affair, in which Trump took over the renovation of a public ice rink the city had turned into a carnival of delay and disaster, is recounted in every last detail. We learn the right (Trump's) and the wrong (the city's) ways of pouring concrete; we hear of two separate occasions on which landscaping jobs were scandalously botched by Park Department workers. What was "at the heart of this whole sad saga"? "Incompetence, plain and simple."

The stakes in the Television City project are high. The property is squeezed between two transportation facilities that are already obsolete, the 72nd Street subway station and the West Side highway, and whoever hopes to build on the site will have to make a hefty contribution toward their improvement. The Upper West Side has already been developed very close to the limit of what its residents will tolerate—and its residents are constitutionally not fond of developers. It is in Trump's interest to make his case seem the case for jobs and prosperity, not for greed and glitz, and to make the city's case seem a case only for waste and delay. "When bad times come, I'll get what I want" means, "Deal with me now, because look what the city gave me when it was desperate." True enough; his book contains many proofs. But that was when he was hungry. Now he's fat. The book is here to tell us it's not his fault.

IN DONALD TRUMP the world of New York real estate touches the world of the arts. For the ability to make it all look like an accident while you are promoting yourself frantically has become a necessary accoutrement of genius in New York's fast-track high-yield high culture. Tama Janowitz has managed to cultivate both an appearance that is a parody of East Village "look at me" contemporaneity and a gee-whiz manner that says, Why is all this happening to me? "Just someone who wants to be left alone with her typewriter" is the sort of thing you'll hear her say on the David Letterman show. This is a style of self-promotion that has worked before. It is the trademark style of Janowitz's mentor, Andy Warhol. What one wants to know, of course, is: Is Tama Janowitz really *happy*?

What is happening to Tama is this. In 1986 Crown Publishers gave her a modest advance on a collection of stories, and put her to work merchandising them. Among other stunts, she starred in the first "literary video," was promoted as a wacky personality to feature writers and TV talk-show producers, and was sent into Lutèce and The Four Seasons to hand out copies of her stories to unsuspecting diners.

The book, of course, was *Slaves of New York*, a compendium of wan tales about lower Manhattanites who suffer the tortures of affectlessness (there is no literary disease more affecting). Some of the work had appeared in the *New Yorker*; it all has the unmistakable aura of the M.F.A. The hype worked. *Slaves of New York* made the best-seller list for a shining moment or two, and brought Crown a tidy sum for the paperback rights.

The odor of academia is not so surprising. Janowitz has a B.A. from Barnard, an M.A. from Hollins College in Virginia, and an M.F.A. from Columbia; she has studied at the Yale School of Drama. She wanted to be, apparently, a serious writer. Then she met the people from Crown. What they asked her to do was, she told a reporter from *Manhattan, inc.*, "humiliating":


THE SOUTHERN REVIEW

Winter 1988

*Reflections*

Louis Simpson, "Late Entries"

Mary Lee Settle, "The Search for Beulah Land"

Samuel Pickering, "At Cambridge"

*Essays by* William L. Andrews, Michael O'Brien, Walter B. Rideout, Laurence Goldstein, Marion Montgomery, John P. Sisk

*Poetry by* Andrew Hudgins, John William Corrington, Ted Benttinen, James MacGuire, Hank Lazer, Edward Francisco, John Daniel, Marilee Richards, David Craig Austin

*Fiction by* Susan Ponsoldt, Brad Conard, Colby Willis, Robert Drake, Linda Clarke

*Reviews by* Bertram Wyatt-Brown and Robert H. Brinkmeyer, Jr.

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> But I had to decide [to do it]. Because I'd been sitting in this room being broke year after year. There's a breaking point where you say, "I've just gotta get out there and say, 'Hey, I wrote this book, and I worked hard on it. *And read the goddamn book!*' " So it's unseemly behavior. Screw that.

She was 29. It's tough not making it in New York.

NOW, having placed its author in a series of magazine ads for Amaretto and Rose's Lime Juice (where she appears with party animal Arthur Schlesinger Jr.), Crown is rushing to keep up with its own bandwagon. It seemed there was nothing doing in the typewriter, so they looked in the drawer. There they discovered *A Cannibal in Manhattan*, a novel Janowitz had written before celebrityhood was thrust upon her but that she had been unable to get published. This did not perturb the people at Crown, presumably since the criteria previously applied must have been merely literary.

The novel is such a desultory affair that if I gave a plot summary I might be accused of overanalyzing. What one expects from the title, of course, is, first, the Martian effect: what New Yorkers take for granted the cannibal finds exotic. And, second, a bit of modernist irony: the "primitive" is more "civilized" than "civilization." These literary standbys have become so wrung out, though, that Janowitz can barely summon enough inventive energy to pay them lip service. This sort of thing is the best she can come up with (the cannibal is flying from his island home to New York):

> A while later another stewardess appeared with marvelous celebratory feast-trays, one of which was handed to each person. Oh, how delightful! For there was a little menu with each tray, and on my dish was something called the *hot pastrami sandwich*: this consisted of a very hard roll, soggy in the center and topped with tiny seeds like gnats, while within were some curious greasy strands of meat. And there was also a salad, which consisted of some pale-green slimy leaves and a tiny red rubber ball. . . . There was also the *cake*. . . .

A kind of humor is intended, I suspect; it's a humor for the '80s. It's the smart person being stupid routine—the routine David Letterman has perfected for making fun of people who aren't David Letterman. The joke is that the cannibal's making-it-strange descriptions and Montaignesque observations on the savagery of the civilized locals are funny not because they're witty or pointed—that kind of humor is out of style. They're funny because they're dumb.

Tama looks miserable on the Letterman show. "Humiliation" is a strong word, and she may have meant it. Of course, it's hard to tell with people like Janowitz and Warhol and Trump—people who do a striptease with their personalities. "Is *this* the real me, or am I just selling a product?" they seem to be asking again and again.

And then they ask us to feel sorry for them. In the glossy publicity packet that comes from Crown with the review copy of *A Cannibal in Manhattan* is a letter headed "Dear Producer." Here are "just some of the ideas," the letter says, "of a program that could feature Tama." This idea sounds especially promising to me: "A profile of a young American author who after struggling for a number of years suddenly finds herself in demand by the public and the media. . . . How does one deal with the pressure to please as well as the pressure to produce another best-seller?"

IF THE TRUMPS and the Tamas of the world are important, on the principle that if we did not have the spectacle of excess we would not know why moderation should be counted a virtue, then the boom economy of the '80s has provided many cautionary examples. Among the choicest are those described in *New York Confidential*. Sharon Churcher, a journalist formerly with the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Post*, now at *New York* magazine, has gotten the story as no one else has. *New York Confidential* is the story *Manhattan, inc.* and *Vanity Fair*—magazines that flirt coyly with the world of the Roy Cohns and the Claus von Bülows and that position themselves in relation to their subjects somewhere comfortably between sycophancy and contempt—are afraid to tell you.

The charity balls and the Eurotrash "titled" designers and the services that provide celebrities for your parties may not have received quite this sharp a treatment before, but they are familiar objects of satire. The prime piece in Churcher's book is the report on the financial condition of Manhattan's churches. This is a real estate story like nothing in Trump. Trinity Church on Wall Street, for instance, owns 40 commercial properties and has a stock portfolio worth $50 million, yielding an income of $25 million yearly, of which $2.6 million is given to charity. Its rector has a salary of $100,000 and a church-owned home on the Upper East Side. ("There's such money here that you really wouldn't want the man at the top to be worried about money," explains a spokesman.) It is currently selling spaces in its mausoleum overlooking the Hudson River for prices that range from $1,250 to $20,000. St. Bartholomew's on Park Avenue, which had been trying to sell its air rights to a developer until the Landmarks Preservation Commission squashed the deal, spends $100,000 of an annual budget of $3.2 million on charity. The rectory is a 13-room apartment on Park Avenue.

But the best is the story about the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, which sits appropriately across the street from Trump Tower. It seems that five or six homeless people had taken to using the steps of the church after hours as a refuge from the cold. The security guard was instructed to chase them away. "They were using the place as bathrooms," explained a church staff member, "causing corrosion to the wood and stone, and there were potential fire problems because people were building little homes of cardboard and using little candles." Several months later, with a lucrative sale of its development rights in the works, the church relented and announced plans to provide six cots, five nights a week, for the homeless. But the pastor first had a matter of principle to settle. "Presumptions that the church should be trying to improve housing for the poor. . . . The presumption that the church should be small and impoverished. These are hidden presumptions that I see all the time," he told Churcher. "Are *you* housing the homeless in your home? What's the Empire State Building doing to help the homeless . . .? Why should people just pick on the churches? There's a fairness element here."

THE WORLD OF those with too much and the world of those without anything have sometimes appeared to be the only worlds in contemporary New York. The dichotomy, in part by virtue of being reported on endlessly in the very places that celebrate success ("THE YOUNG AND THE HOMELESS" ran the headline on a picture story in a recent issue of *New York Woman*, a magazine for young professionals), eventually became a part of the mentality of the boom. Having is the only happiness, was the message. All else is misery and madness.

One of the attractions of William



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Geist's "About New York" column in the *Times* was that it often seemed the only feature writing in the city that reported on the happiness of having enough. His stories fed the almost forgotten illusion of an eternal New York, a world of ordinary people of ordinary appetite, a world that existed before the designer clothes and the yuppie restaurants and the superstretches invaded, and that would go on existing long after those ephemera of the bull market had departed. Geist has since left the paper to appear as a correspondent on "CBS Sunday Morning." *City Slickers* is a selection of his work at the *Times*.

ON THE FACE of it, it's a questionable idea for a book. The premise is unspeakably mundane: New York is one c-r-a-z-y town. The method is a local news standby: What does the man on the street think of all these goings on? But the execution is impeccable. And the moral sentiment is admirable; it is even, in its way and times, brave.

Some of Geist's pieces were scoops of a sort. The story of Kyu-Sung Choi, the Korean immigrant who wanted to open a deli on Park Avenue but was opposed by the local aristocracy, was Geist's. So was the story of Eugene Lang, the millionaire who, on the spur of the moment, announced at a sixth-grade graduation in Harlem that he would pay the college tuition of any child in the class who finished high school ("maybe the greatest speech ever made," one student called it). So was the story of the bidding war for rights to the murder of Jennifer Dawn Levin—the preppy murder case. But Geist's strong suit is the non-story—chatting with customers at the La-Z-Boy Showcase Shoppe in Queens, for instance, or sitting in on the deliberations of the powerful Food Committee at the Hebrew Home for the Aged in Riverdale.

The message his subjects deliver is deeply subversive of the ethos of the age. The La-Z-Boy customers, interviewed on the day of the New York marathon, are entirely happy without the narcissistic rigors of yuppie "fitness." Bernie Spitz, the Hanger King, sums up his career in tones that ring truer than anything in Trump's autobiography: "It's been a wonderful life. There's never a dull moment in the hanger business, as you can imagine!" Charles Richman, who draws up an annual list of the world's best-dressed men, on Pope John Paul II: "He just wears religious garb, of course, but he looks marvelous in it, doesn't he?" Albert Golub, 50 years in the coat-checking profession: "One of the finest things you can do in life, I believe, is check your coat. In this way, you don't have to sit on it."

The challenge in the man-on-the-street genre is to get the quote that's funny without making fun of the person who's quoted. The risk is that the reporter will get caught winking at the reader when the subject's back is turned. This is especially an '80s temptation: in times when the well-off feel a little too guilty to laugh at each other's indulgences, the ordinary becomes campy. Geist avoids the danger in his columns; he conveys a real affection for his subjects and, when called for, a real anger on their behalf. His column on the Park Avenue deli aroused the city.

If there is in fact something that seems forever about the city, something certain to outlast the greed and the shame, it's the image we hold of it in our minds, a ghost made of steel and concrete and limestone and brick—"the city of frozen fountains." *New York 1930* is a stupendous record of the creation of that New York, the physical city that, like a mountain range or a desert, seems as much a thing imagined as a thing seen and touched.

It is fitting that this architectural history should appear in the same year as *The Art of the Deal*. For it reminds us that the city of the Chrysler Building and the Empire State Building and Rockefeller Center was not simply the reflection of a phase in the history of architectural taste, but the product of conditions that no longer obtain. The city most people think of as the essential Manhattan is not so old, and it was not so inevitable. There is no greater mistake for those who cherish it than to imagine that it is eternal.

The New York skyscraper is one of the most distinctive buildings in the world. When it first began to appear on the skyline in the 1920s, it generated enormous enthusiasm and enormous dismay—those were the days (they now seem long gone) of architectural utopianism. Some observers (the enthusiastic ones) even felt that a New World style had been established, and extended comparisons were drawn between the modern skyscraper, with its multiple setbacks and towers, and the Mayan pyramids.


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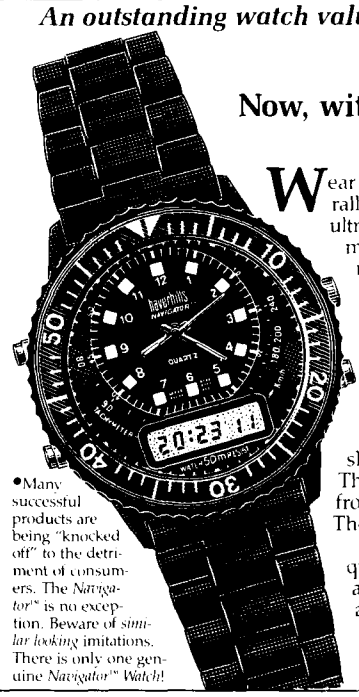

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But the design affinities were purely accidental. The appearance of the '30s skyscraper, as the admirably restrained text by Robert Stern, Gregory Gilmartin, and Thomas Mellins explains in great detail, was determined by three conditions external to aesthetics. The first was the zoning requirement that tall buildings have setbacks to allow sunlight to reach street level. The city's insistence on maximizing sunlight had nothing to do with concerns about the mental well-being of the citizenry; its motivation was economic. Less light on the smaller structures surrounding the skyscraper meant lower assessed values for those properties, and hence lower taxes.

The second consideration had to do with the economics of the developer. The setback requirement meant that for a tall building to be profitable after construction costs it needed as big a base as possible. Thus the massive, cathedral-like foundations of colossuses like the Empire State Building and 30 Rockefeller Plaza. On the other hand, since air conditioning had not yet been developed, office space could be sold at a premium up to a depth of only 30 feet; a deeper office was harder to light and, since it was farther from a window, harder to cool. Which is why the classic skyscraper tapers—elegantly when seen from the sky, dramatically when seen from the base—to a needlelike tower.

In 1932 Frank Lloyd Wright complained that "the skyscraper envelope is not ethical, beautiful, or permanent. It is a commercial exploit or a mere expedient. It has no higher ideal of unity than commercial success." He was entirely right. And he would be right today. Trump Tower, as Ada Louise Huxtable pointed out in a review of the building's design in 1979, looks like nothing so much as the zoning concessions Trump received to build it. The width of the entrance, the size of the atrium, the height of the tower are all functions of what the city required or was willing to give up, and of what met Trump's commercial purposes most profitably. It is pointless to expect developers to build for other reasons. What *New York 1930* tells us is that though the developers won't change, the conditions can be made to.

There is one other ingredient in '30s architecture, though, one that does not reduce to a costing out and that is not so easy to re-create. It has to do with an idea people once held about the uses of the city. The authors of *New York 1930* call this idea "urbanism." It is a sense a city somehow expresses and feeds about the public side of private life, about the enrichment that comes from sharing the spaces of one's pleasures and pains. This is precisely a sense that luxury apartment towers in the commercial center of the city violate. Trump Tower, the Museum Tower, the absurdly overscaled hotels beginning to appear on Times Square—these are advertisements for exclusivity. Private appetites only satisfied here, they seem to say to the man and woman on the street.

When you stand on a subway platform in New York, or on a street corner, or wander through one of the public spaces in private buildings that is not given over, like the atrium of Trump Tower, to a frenzy of upscale shopping, you rarely hear strangers talking to one another—about the events of the hour, or the fate of the Yankees, or the health of the city on that particular day. Occasionally a cabbie will bring up those subjects; they all live in the outer boroughs, of course. But Manhattan is more than ever a place of people with their heads down, the better to keep their inner fires burning. "Civic-mindedness" is one of the names for the spirit of New York 1930. How quaint that word sounds in New York today.

We make the city we are, but we are not the only ones who have to live in it. Though the market may slump and the balloon may shrink, though we may wake up to find that, as *Newsweek* announced, "Greed Is Out," though we may get the homeless off the steps of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church and under their own roofs, the physical residue of the '80s remains and becomes the skeleton of future imaginings. Literary videos will go, and red suspenders will go, but Trump Tower will remain, a monument to appetite.

# THE BATTLE FOR MOSCOW

## Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World by Mikhail Gorbachev

(Harper & Row, 225 pp., $19.95)

Ironically enough, a month after the long-brewing threat to Mikhail Gorbachev's authority erupted in November at home, American euphoria about him soared through the roof. In Washington the talented leader chalked up a series of triumphs. He signed a radical INF agreement; he staged a love-in with the American Establishment; he dazzled world television audiences; and he went away with the scourge of the evil empire promising to pay homage next spring in the very heart of that empire. In Moscow, by contrast, Gorbachev's wily opponents had just forced him to throw his most passionate supporter to the wolves; compelled him, for the first time, to castigate those who were pushing *perestroika* too fast; criticized him indirectly for reckless liberalism and other sins; checked a range of liberalizing policies; and given his main potential rival, Yegor Ligachev, the confidence to flex his muscles discreetly in public.

These developments, little studied and still less understood in the West, have led Michel Tatu, the distinguished Sovietologist of *Le Monde*, to speculate about future moves that might put Ligachev in the key position of general secretary and transfer Gorbachev to the less important, more representational post of Soviet president. A reading of *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World* confirms the plausibility of some such development. For, although Gorbachev's book is little more than a cobbled reworking of themes familiar from his speeches, it makes clearer than ever that his radicalism is no passing whim. It must indeed be disturbing to moderate reformers such as Ligachev.

To read the book through the eyes of the moderates is to come away with the following thoughts. Gorbachev is an outstanding diplomat and public relations man, well suited to promoting Soviet interests abroad, especially in the West. Still, his genuine passion for democratization and public candor (*glasnost*), for infusing Soviet socialism with a still nascent but potentially transfiguring democracy, contains a streak of Dubček-like naïveté that could eventually threat-



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en the Party's political control. A similar naïveté shows in his virtual renunciation of Moscow's hegemony over Eastern Europe, in his appeal to its leaders to be equal partners of the Kremlin. This apparent change of line must strike the moderates with memories of successive nightmares in Eastern Europe as enormously risky. Gorbachev's zest for disarmament, and the danger that he might "go soft on the Americans," surely conjure up further doubts. This is not to say that the judgments of the moderates are necessarily right, or even sincere. But they are, right or wrong, sincere or insincere, important factors in the political reality of the Kremlin—factors that many may want to wish away, but shouldn't. It would probably be in the best interests of the peoples of the Soviet Union, of Eastern Europe, and of the United States, if the Gorbachev line were to prevail for the indefinite future; but one should not confuse desire with reality.

A YEAR AGO, the normal cut and thrust of power politics in the Kremlin turned into barely concealed war. At that time Gorbachev laid out his policies of democratization and *glasnost*, only to have the Central Committee reject the more radical ones. In subsequent months the outcry from the moderates and the conservatives could not be wholly barred from the media. Yuri Bondarev, a conservative writer, made a scarcely veiled attack on Gorbachev's reform program, comparing it to the Nazi invasion of the U.S.S.R. in 1941, and calling on the opposition to repel the destructive initiatives with a new Stalingrad to forestall total disaster. Ligachev criticized what he saw as the excesses of *glasnost*, warned that *perestroika* should be about "creation, not negation," and launched a vicious attack on one of Gorbachev's few strong supporters, so clearly targeted that Ligachev did not need to name his victim. (It was Eduard Shevardnadze.) Gorbachev rebutted most of these assaults courageously and argued his case on its merits, with only a couple of ad hominem attacks; but he left himself more open than ever to charges of naïveté about the likely erosion of political control that would result from his policies.

In June the Central Committee once again denied Gorbachev key elements of his proposals, this time on economic reform. While a broad reform package went through, the ministries' control over state-owned and state-run enterprises was not decisively broken, the


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# Israel's Borders
## Are they "legitimate"? Should they be changed?

Many in the Arab world insist that the State of Israel is "illegitimate" and that, in order to be considered for "recognition", it must, at the very least, "adjust" its borders. In order to justify that insistent demand, Arab propaganda has created many myths. By dint of constant repetition, some of these myths have come to be accepted as reality.

### What are some of these myths, and what are the facts?

**Myth:** The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 changed border arrangements that had existed for centuries.
**Fact:** The borders in the Middle East were drawn arbitrarily after World War I, by Britain and France. In the spoils, Britain got Iraq and Palestine. In 1922, contrary to its mandate from the League of Nations, Britain gave the area east of the Jordan River (77% of Palestine) to the Hashemite tribes.

**Myth:** Israel has been expansionist since its establishment.
**Fact:** In 1974, Israel returned to Syria territories captured in the 1967 and 1973 defensive wars. In exchange for a peace treaty, Israel returned the vast Sinai area to Egypt, with all of its settlements, strategic installations, and economic assets. Thus, Israel proved conclusively that peace and security—not extra land—are its top priorities.

**Myth:** Judea and Samaria (also called "the West Bank") are part of Jordan.
**Fact:** The British allocated the area east of the Jordan river to the Hashemite tribes. These tribes founded a kingdom and called it Transjordan. In 1948, after the declaration of Israel's independence, the British-led Transjordanians attacked the newly-founded Jewish state and were able to occupy Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") and the eastern part of Jerusalem. They renamed themselves "Jordan" and stayed in that occupation for 19 years, until they were defeated and driven out by Israel in the 1967 Six Day War.

**Myth:** Israeli settlements in Judea and Samaria ("West Bank") are illegal, an obstacle to peace.
**Fact:** Contrary to what Arab propaganda suggests, Jordan was never sovereign in Judea-Samaria (the "West Bank"). Thus, the constantly-repeated accusation of "Israeli occupation" is pointless. Numerous international legal authorities, among them Eugene Rostow, have shown conclusively that Israel's rights in Judea-Samaria (the "West Bank") are based on international law and are further affirmed by U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338. President Reagan concluded that Jewish settlements are not illegal and that ". . . all people—Moslems, Jews, and Christians—are entitled to live in the West Bank."

**Myth:** Israel annexed the Golan Heights illegally and has no right to hold onto them.
**Fact:** The Golan Heights is a desolate area the size of Queens, NY. The arbitrary boundary lines drawn after World War II did place the Golan Heights in Syria. It put Israel at an impossible military disadvantage. From 1948 until Israel captured the Heights in the 1967 Six-Day War, Syria subjected Israeli settlements in the plains below to constant bombardment. Israel has been prepared to negotiate all issues with Syria, including the status of the Golan Heights.

**Myth:** Israel's insistence on defensible borders is unrealistic in this age of missiles and long-range bombers.
**Fact:** Israel, *including* Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") has an area about half the size of San Bernardino County in California. In contrast, the land area of the Arab nations is twice that of the U.S.! If Israel were to give up Judea and Samaria, it would only be nine miles (!) wide between the Arab military machine and the Mediterranean Sea. That narrow waist contains 75% of Israel's population and most of its industrial installations. Missile and bombers would not be needed. In case of attack, Israel could not mobilize and its principal population centers would be reduced to rubble within a matter of minutes.

Israel is the only victorious country in recorded history that, in quest for peace and acceptance, has surrendered vast territories to the vanquished. Still, Israel is not prepared to commit suicide by yielding to propaganda and myth and by adjusting its boundaries to suit the purposes of its implacable enemies. The insistence on "adjustment" of borders is one step in the plan for its destruction. The solution? Sit down at the negotiating table and work out an agreement on borders, just as Israel did with Egypt. Israel has been ready for such talks for 20 years. So far, only Egypt has finally agreed to sit down and talk to Israel. All other countries concerned consider themselves in a state of war with Israel, deny its "existence", and will not consider any talks or negotiations.

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guidelines for price reform came out as internally contradictory and not firmly market-oriented, and workers were not assigned clear powers to elect their own managers. Moreover, the changes enacted in the top political leadership followed the established pattern of not giving a clear advantage to any one group. The three men elevated to full membership of the Politburo were Alexander Yakovlev, a Gorbachev man; Nikolai Slyunkov, an associate of Premier Nikolai Ryzhkov; and Viktor Nikonov, a possible associate of Ligachev's, who has, in any case, proved himself to be no supporter of Gorbachev.

Showing remarkably poor judgment, both the Western media and the American government depicted this Central Committee meeting as an all-out triumph for Gorbachev. They insisted for months that not just Yakovlev, but Slyunkov and Nikonov as well, were committed Gorbachevites. All this contributed to the subsequent failure properly to notice and to assess the surge of the moderates during Gorbachev's lengthy, and still not fully explained, absence over the summer.

THE MODERATES' offensive came out in the open in lightly veiled attacks by Ligachev and Viktor Chebrikov, the KGB chief, on various radical policies espoused by Gorbachev. Behind the scenes, meanwhile, the moderates, led by Ligachev, were far advanced in carrying out a calculated "provocation" against the most exposed of Gorbachev's committed high-level supporters, Boris Yeltsin. From their position in the Central Committee Secretariat, they had been blocking in particular the personnel changes that Yeltsin was trying to push through in the Moscow Party organization, which he headed. Then, on October 21, they engineered a sudden, unplanned convocation of the Central Committee, to review the draft of the speech that Gorbachev was to deliver two weeks later on the 70th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, apparently ensuring in the process that the draft was a more conservative document than the Gorbachevites wanted.

All this was too much for Yeltsin, who exploded at the plenum. Launching a personal attack on Ligachev, he reportedly accused the Ligachevites of persistently sabotaging *perestroika*. This, presumably, was just what the Ligachevites hoped for. In any event, the strong center-right majority on the Central Committee promptly set to work, excoriating Yeltsin for raising a subject not on the agenda, and for various sins committed over the previous two years. Nobody, it seems, defended him with any conviction. Worse still, three weeks later his fellow radical Gorbachev not only deserted him, but led the pack of wolves that ritually humiliated him, one after the other, each representing a different ministry or Party organization whose vested interest had been threatened or violated by Yeltsin. Thus the stage was set for the final humiliation, Yeltsin's own recantation.

And the intrigues went further. When the decision had been made not to publish any account of the Yeltsin episode at the plenum of October 21, Gorbachev's enemies circulated apparently false reports that Yeltsin had attacked the growth of a personality cult around the general secretary, and also the public role of his wife. These damaging reports were broadcast back to the Soviet Union from the West, forcing Gorbachev to have his spokesman deny them.

Worse, though, was the message the Soviet reporting of Yeltsin's humiliation dispatched throughout the land: that bold people, official or otherwise, who took Gorbachev and his appeals for radical action seriously would be running a terrible risk, because in their hour of trial their patron would probably betray them.

IN ANY CASE, what happened on November 2 was that Gorbachev ceased to lead his *perestroika* revolution from the front. Until then he had lambasted only those who were blocking *perestroika*. Now he was compelled to denounce also those who were "impatient" and thought you could "leap over stages"—a clear reference to the just disgraced Yeltsin. Thus readers of Gorbachev's book (in dozens of countries) will not be impressed by the passage in which he denounces, with much fanfare, those critics who are skeptical about *perestroika*, and claims, writing in the late summer, that "today members of the Politburo and the Central Committee are unanimous as they have never been before, and there is nothing that can make this unanimity waver."

On the eve of the Washington summit, in case all these problems were not enough, Ligachev delivered another blow. Having stated unconvincingly in an interview with Tatu for *Le Monde* that Gorbachev and he were "fellow-thinkers," he then revealed that even though Gorbachev is general secretary, he, Ligachev, has been chairing the Central Committee Secretariat, at the Politburo's request. True, later it came to light that a similar arrangement has prevailed for most of the time under previous Soviet administrations. Still, the information had been a closely guarded secret. Clearly Ligachev revealed it when he did in order to let the world know that in reality Gorbachev belongs to a collective leadership, and that even though Gorbachev's retinue and the media might conspire together in Washington to build a cult around the Soviet leader, he is not much more than a first among equals. It was certainly noted by close observers in Washington that extensive consultation went on between Moscow and the Gorbachev delegation during the summit, that the general secretary was in no way a free agent.

OF COURSE most Americans were dazzled by Gorbachev's famed charm and silver tongue; they never imagined that he had anything less than overwhelming personal authority at home. But experienced observers saw a different picture. A senior American official, for example, drew a comparison between the boxing champ he had dealt with in Reykjavik, who had "never had a glove laid on him," and the champ who came to Washington and, though still buoyant, seemed to have suffered a serious mauling. This was confirmed by one of Gorbachev's most fervent supporters, the playwright Mikhail Shatrov, who stated repeatedly at a meeting in the capital that public life in the Soviet Union at present "can only be compared to a war."

The contrast between the upbeat press conference that Gorbachev gave on his departure from Washington and the relatively cool statement he read on Soviet television three days later was also striking. He looked like a man who had come off a high; he had returned from the intensive adulation by the world's media to the reality of constant in-fighting with obstructive colleagues at home.

The summer trend of backtracking in various areas of policy has continued to spread since the Yeltsin debacle. Skepticism about the whole process of arms control with the Americans has surfaced in parts of the Soviet media. Discussion of the economic reforms that go into action this month has been remarkably muted. One senior politician has complained that officials are adapting poorly to the requirements of the reforms; an expert has lamented that their center-



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piece—the new law on state-run enterprises—"is being forgotten and ignored." And agricultural reform, which until recently seemed to be the most promising item on the agenda, is now in the hands of not the long-standing expert on agriculture, namely Gorbachev, but of Nikonov and Ligachev, which probably rules out a radical change. Ligachev also seems to be playing the key role regarding the next Central Committee plenum, which is to discuss educational reforms. Since this subject belongs in Yakovlev's bailiwick, it appears that Gorbachev's most committed supporter in the Politburo has had his authority curtailed.

Democratization has taken some heavy blows, notably in *Pravda*, where correspondents claim that the campaign for workers to elect their managers will lead to "all-permissiveness, anarchy, and chaos," and insist that the undermining of the Party's control over economic and local government appointments must be reversed. *Glasnost* too has suffered in *Pravda*. First, the above-mentioned Bondarev and two fellow writers called for more conservative cultural policies, especially regarding Western imports like rock music, which is all the rage among Soviet young people. Then their call was taken up by Defense Minister Dmitri Yazov, whose appointment in May was hard to interpret, and who can probably no longer be seen as a Gorbachevite, if indeed he ever was one. Finally, the more liberal policies on human rights that went into effect a year ago have been quietly switched into reverse in the last few months. Most demonstrations are now prevented or broken up by the KGB; human rights activists are often harassed or briefly detained, and occasionally arrested or beaten up. Releases of dissidents have slowed; the future of emigration from the Soviet Union looks highly problematic.

NONE OF THIS is to suggest, however, that Gorbachev and other reformists are on the way out. They are putting up a fierce struggle in the wars that currently engulf every area of Soviet public life, trying to beat off the center right's offensive. The Washington summit has helped them. As long as Gorbachev survives, they have a chance.

Gorbachev is a formidable politician. He is a bold, patriotic, Communist apparatchik whom the system has trained to act aggressively and often autocratically. At the same time, faced by the intractable problems the system has produced over 70 years, he has taught himself that nobody has a monopoly on truth, that it is often essential to listen and to debate, that in the U.S.S.R. the whole range of domestic and foreign policies must be coherent if real success is to be attainable. True, most of the elements in his "new thinking" have clear if not identical precedents in the Khrushchev period. But compared with the Brezhnev era, there is a lot that is new, in emphasis and in substance.

For example, the Soviet leaders now consciously try to say the same thing to different audiences, even if they don't always succeed. Soviet diplomacy is generally more straightforward and constructive. The stress on mutual security, and on the interdependence of the world community, has a more sincere ring than before. Clashes of opinion are often encouraged as a way of getting at the truth, and the views of foreign critics are no longer just ignored or caricatured. The diagnosis of the Soviet economy and society presented by Gorbachev two years ago had an intellectual coherence that Brezhnev never approached. The recognition has dawned that society contains groups with diverse and often conflicting interests, that these must somehow be reconciled by politicians, that politicians are bound to make mistakes. And the stress on the need for social justice is stronger than before.

All these themes appear in Gorbachev's book, in refreshingly crisp prose. We are light-years away from the ponderous "ideas" of Brezhnev and Chernenko, from Brezhnev's leaden, complacent style and Chernenko's extraordinarily dogmatic tone. Instead we have an updated, more sophisticated development of Khrushchevism—of the strategy of ending Stalinist oppression; mobilizing the whole people; modernizing culture and society; opening up dramatically to the outside world; revamping ideology, law, and political and economic structures; creating incentives; encouraging innovation; competing economically with the West; and finally, promoting *glasnost* and democratization in ways very similar to Gorbachev's.

But Gorbachev's essay also reveals his weaknesses. He has no feel for history. His historical analysis is downright primitive compared with his grasp of economics and his relatively sophisticated discussion of social problems. He has an occasional tendency to boast, as when he quotes inordinate praise of himself or writes as though he were the first person ever to realize that nuclear war is not a means to achieve rational goals. And he can turn into Dr. Pangloss: he has convinced himself, for example, that the working class is overwhelmingly impatient to carry out *perestroika* (the evidence suggests that this is false) and that only conservative officials are blocking it from doing so.

Gorbachev does not tell the American reader that, in an effort to rouse his own ruling class from its life of inertia and privilege, he has twice quoted Lenin's ominous warning that revolutionary parties that complacently fail to confront their weaknesses are bound to perish. He prefers to give foreigners a more upbeat impression of Soviet prospects. Moreover, while he insists on the importance of trust in international affairs, he dismisses the comprehensive bugging of the new American Embassy in Moscow as a matter of no significance.

Finally, he also seems to believe, with the czars and the Slavophiles, in the *sobornost* fallacy—that is, in the notion that society's conflicts can always be resolved with reliable mechanisms for reporting and petitioning about citizens' problems, with forums for the free, communal discussion of solutions, with responsive leadership at the top to make decisions; with goodwill all around; and without recourse, therefore, to anything

### EDWARD HOPPER'S SEVEN A.M. (1948)

The morning seems to have no light to spare
For these close, silent, neighboring, dark trees,
But too much brightness, in low-lying glare,
For middling truths, such as whose premises
These are, and why just here, and what we might
Expect to make of a shop-window shelf
Displaying last year's styles of dark and light?
Here at this moment, morning is most itself,
Before the geometric shadows, more
Substantial almost than what casts them, pale
Into whatever later light will be.
What happens here? What is the sort of store
Whose windows frame such generality?
Meaning is up for grabs, but not for sale.

JOHN HOLLANDER



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as divisive, legalistic, or coldly Western as a system of competing, self-interested political parties. The czarist autocracy justified its rule in this way. So does Gorbachev. In his view, *glasnost* will ensure the reporting, the petitioning, and the discussion; democratization of the single permitted party will guarantee a responsive leadership.

To survive and prosper, Gorbachev must achieve tangible economic breakthroughs without much more delay, and he must widen his political and social bases of support. His hope is that *glasnost* and democratization will strengthen his backing, as the stronger, more dynamic elements at all levels of society realize that they are getting their chance, and take it. But the closely interwoven policies of *glasnost* and democratization are currently under mounting pressure from the center right led by Ligachev; and the continuing sluggishness of the economy, and especially of consumption, is a formidable potential threat to the general secretary.

For the time being, Gorbachev and Ligachev may need each other. The situation is probably too unstable, and the deep trauma of the successions of 1982-85 too recent, for either to risk a dramatic move. Gorbachev, who reminds us in his book that politics is the art of the possible, has retreated in the last two months to lick his wounds, to try to capitalize on the summit, to regroup his forces, and perhaps to make new coalitions.

But if, as I suspect, his personality is not so different from Khrushchev's, he is unlikely to settle for the quiet life. To have any hope of making the radical advances that he requires in policy and in Central Committee turnover at the special Party conference next June, he cannot afford to let the grass grow under his feet. That conference gives him an incentive, too, to make further real progress in Soviet-American relations. If he can achieve that, he may be able to turn Ronald Reagan's spring trip to Canossa to badly needed account.

**PETER REDDAWAY**

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# THE SCORPION'S STING

## Epigrams of Martial
## Englished by Divers Hands
## edited by J. P. Sullivan and Peter Whigham

(University of California Press, 599 pp., $58)

In ancient Greek the word "epigram" meant nothing more than "inscription," its exact Latin equivalent. It was a statement "written on" something, originally something other than paper: an elegiac couplet naming the dedicator carved on the base or leg of a statue dedicated to a god, commemorative verses chiseled in the stone of a funeral column. The tomb of the Spartans killed at Thermopylae, for example, was inscribed with the famous couplet: "Stranger, tell the Spartans that we lie here, obeying their orders." And the base of the statue of the Athenian tyrannicides proclaimed, in the same tightly organized verse form, their name and title to glory: "In truth a great light shone on the people of Athens when Harmodios and Aristogeiton killed Hipparchus." The epigram says much in little. It has to, for cutting an inscription in bronze or marble is a laborious and expensive process; our word "lapidary" (formed from the Latin word for "stone") alludes to the material constraints that made for concision.

With the spread of literacy in the fifth and later centuries B.C., the epigram became a literary genre. Although concision remained its hallmark, its subject matter widened to include not only imaginary dedications and epitaphs for poets and other figures long since dead, but eventually almost every aspect of social and private life: love poems (some of the most exquisite were later attributed, falsely, to Plato), prayers, philosophical reflections on life and death, literary criticism and polemic, and satire (doctors were a favored target).

The satiric epigram, especially the "short poem ending in a witty or ingenious turn of thought to which the rest of the composition is intended to lead up" (as the Oxford English Dictionary defines it), did not come into fashion in the Greek world until the first century. At about the same time, this particular form found its classic Latin voice in the 1,500 or so epigrams of a poet born in the Roman province of Spain, Marcus Valerius Martialis, known to the English poets of the 16th and 17th centuries, who admired and imitated him, as Martial.

Martial had his Roman predecessors, whom he mentions in the preface to his first collection, which was issued in A.D. 85-86. Among them was Catullus, whose extant corpus of 116 poems contains, besides the passionate love poems for which he is best known, scurrilous attacks on his contemporaries (Julius Caesar among others); compliments, jokes, and exhortations addressed to friends and enemies; sexually explicit vignettes of the activities of persons who may or may not be fictitious; and anecdotal sketches of life among the younger Roman aristocrats—what in his introductory poem he calls, with ironic self-deprecation, *nugae*, "trifles." Martial describes his poems with the same word, and his concerns are similar, with two significant exceptions. There are no passionate love poems in his book, and, unlike Catullus, he makes no attacks on public figures. The Republic had long since been replaced by the Principate, and the only acceptable comment on a ruling emperor was flattery, a commodity that Martial supplied with a lavish hand for the delectation of the emperor Domitian (A.D. 81-96).

Domitian's assassination in 96 brought to an end a reign of terror that the historian Tacitus, who lived through it, described, in words that bridge the centuries, as "the extreme of slavery, when the informer robbed us of the interchange of speech and hearing. We should have lost memory as well as voice, if it had been as easy to forget as to keep silence." When, with Domitian's successors, the era of "the five good emperors" began, Martial apologized in an epigram for his obsequious adulation of the tyrant. Imagining that the usual fulsome compliments come asking to be written up, he tells them their day is done: "I am not going to call anyone master and god; there is no longer any place for you in this town." It is a witty apologia, but it did him no good;



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out of favor, he retired to end his days in the provincial Spain he had left for Rome as a young man.

POLITICS and love aside, Martial's range is very wide. J. P. Sullivan, one of the editors of this new anthology, speaks of his "witty, yet almost Dickensian, depiction of Roman life." And it is true that to read his epigrams is to take a tour of ancient Rome—from the newly built Colosseum to the slave market, from the bookshops where Martial's epigrams are on sale ("Near Caesar's Forum there's a shop. . . . Look for me there") to the usually meager fare of the table of the literary patron, not to mention the brothels and the beds of sexual partners locked in every conceivable position and combination. His poems, to quote Sullivan, are a gallery of "satiric portraits and sketches of patrons and clients, dandies, upstarts, fortune hunters, connoisseurs, dinner cadgers, lawyers, schoolmasters, doctors, debtors, bores, poisoners, nymphomaniacs, hypocritical intellectuals and the like."

Martial was an author much read and enjoyed in the ancient world. Unlike Catullus, whose text depends on a single manuscript (now lost) that turned up in 13th-century Verona, Martial survived the Dark Ages in an impressive number of copies. He was among the first of the classics to appear in print (in 1471), and was a prime favorite of poets and translators in Renaissance France and England. Sullivan points out that the skillful wit of his compliments to sovereigns and patrons recommended itself to 16th- and 17th-century poets; "they too knew the mechanics and requirements of power and patronage." And as a model for the short witty poem, a favorite medium of, among many others, Donne, Harrington, Prior, and Herrick, Martial had no rival.

He was also one of the authors included in the famous French series of classical editions made for the Dauphin, *in usum serenissimi Delphini*, the eldest son of Louis XIV. The editors, concerned for the presumed innocence of the royal pupil, relegated all the obscene epigrams to an appendix, an expedient that, as Byron remarked in *Don Juan*, "saves, in fact, the trouble of an index: For there we have them all at one fell swoop." When, two-and-a-half centuries later, the editor of the Loeb Classical Library edition of Martial faced the problem of providing a prose translation of the offending items, he fell back on the elegant Italian version of Giuspanio Graglia.

The sexually explicit epigrams, which cluster particularly thick in Book XI (recently issued in a scholarly edition, with prose translation, by Oxford University Press), leave nothing to the imagination. "I wish he were less nauseous," Macaulay wrote, echoing Byron's ironic "all those nauseous epigrams of Martial." And in fact the obscene poems (about one-tenth of the corpus) range from the raunchy to the disgusting, from *Penthouse* to *Hustler* and beyond. This was an obstacle to the appreciation of Martial in Victorian times; but, as the editors of this selection put it, "this side of Martial does interest the modern audience because of the increasing sexual frankness of our own literature and a greater curiosity about subjects formerly kept from historical and critical inspection."

That curiosity will be fully satisfied by this volume. This is no "gelded Martiall"—John Donne's indignant dismissal of a bowdlerized selection edited by a Jesuit in 1599. The "mainly modern" translators (among them such well-known practitioners of the art as Dudley Fitts, Tony Harrison, Rolfe Humphries, James Michie, Peter Porter, and Peter Whigham) unblushingly supply Anglo-Saxon four- and five-letter equivalents for the crude terms of what Martial is pleased to call *Romana simplicitas*, "Latin blunt and direct," in Sullivan's translation. Interestingly enough, in view of the modern rediscovery of the "other Victorians," the most repellently disgusting poem of the lot (XI 61) is translated (and expanded) in elegant Swinburnian rhythm and revolting detail by the Victorian litterateur George Augustus Henry Sala.

THESE POEMS reveal prejudices that were characteristic of the Roman male animal, but will scarcely recommend them to educated readers today. The persona of the epigrammatist is not averse to playing the active role in a homosexual coupling, especially with a handsome slave boy, but he expresses loathing for a grown man who assumes the passive role. He regards lesbian love as a monstrous aberration (it is manless adultery); and in heterosexual relations he expects oral favors from his female partner, but regards a man who would reciprocate as the lowest of degenerates. His views of the married state are summed up in a couplet that runs, in James Michie's elegant version: "Wives should obey their husbands. Only then / Can women share equality with men."

When one adds to all this the fawning adulation of the poems addressed to the powerful, the whining tone of his complaints about the meanness of his patrons, and the tedious repetition of some of his themes and rhetorical tricks, there seem to be grounds for asking whether Martial deserves to be reissued for the modern reader. An affirmative answer is suggested by the number and the quality of the poets who have translated him; in addition to the modern poets listed above, this volume offers versions of Martial by Byron, Cowley, Harrington, Leigh Hunt, Johnson, Jonson, Pope, Pound, Stevenson, and Swift.

An even stronger argument for Martial's importance is the strength and spread of his influence on English poetry. Sullivan's introductory essay deals especially with the presence of Martial in the poetry of the 16th and 17th centuries, and goes on to remark that what won his admirers was above all the quality the Augustans knew as "wit." "It is scarcely an exaggeration," he writes, "to claim that the lineal descendants of Martial's biting elegiac distichs are the couplets of John Dryden and Alexander Pope."

The wit is best displayed in those epigrams that reflect the lapidary origin of the genre; in these the scorpion sting in the tail is most deadly. The couplet on married life quoted above is a brilliant example; the point is not clear until the very last word, which fulfills expectation by completing the tight metrical pattern but defies it by its paradoxical sense. *Inferior matrona suo sit, Prisce, marito* ("Inferior let the wife be, Priscus, to her husband"). *Non aliter fiunt femina virque* . . . ("Not otherwise are wife and husband . . .") *pares* ("equal"). That last word was unpredictable and yet, once heard, seems inevitable.

SINCE English verse, unlike Latin, is not marshaled in strict quantitative patterns, the precision of the Latin elegiac couplet, which gives such rhythmic emphasis to the closing syllables, has to be obtained by the skillful use of rhyme. This was an imperative of the Augustan heroic couplet. But the Augustans were not the only poets to share the legacy of Martial; the sound of his voice can be heard in every age of English poetry. Belloc, Blake, Burns, Byron, Coleridge, Graves, Hardy, Hood, Hopkins, Housman, Kipling, Landor, Moore, Rossetti, and Yeats—these are some of the poets whose names appear in the index of



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writers at the back of Geoffrey Grigson's invaluable *The Faber Book of Epigrams and Epitaphs*, and their indebtedness to Martial is plain to see.

Byron's epitaph for Castlereagh, for example, is a brilliant specimen of the sting in the tail, provided by an explosive final rhyme. "Posterity will ne'er survey / A nobler grave than this; / Here lie the bones of Castlereagh. / Stop, traveller, and piss." Martial would never have launched such a missile against a real person, but he would have admired the ferocious whiplash of that last word. Byron, of course, knew his Martial well, but the tradition can be seen at work even in the efforts of anonymous epigrammatists, like the one who wrote, on the wall of a U.S. Army latrine during the Second World War, some lines that expressed the deepest feelings of most of the combatants. "Soldiers who wish to be a hero," it ran, "Are practically zero, / But those who wish to be civilians, / Jesus, they run into millions."

This anthology is long overdue. It is a generous selection: about 400 of the epigrams in modern translations and an appendix of some 40 older versions for comparison. It is handsomely produced; the poems are well spaced, with the original Latin facing on the left-hand page. And it covers every aspect of Martial's oeuvre. Though the scorpion epigrams predominate (as they should), there is much besides: longer poems dealing with life in Rome or the country (where Martial had a rural retreat), affectionate addresses to friends, literary and social gossip—poems that even Macaulay (who, characteristically, "learned about 360 of the best lines") praised for their "rapid succession of vivid images." Martial himself can be cited for a review of his book: "Good work you'll find, some poor, and much that's worse; / It takes all sorts to make a book of verse."

**BERNARD KNOX**

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# NEUROSIS AND NAUSEA

## The Freud Scenario
## by Jean-Paul Sartre
## edited by J.-B. Pontalis
## translated by Quintin Hoare

(University of Chicago Press, 549 pp., $24.95)

## The Politics of Prose: Essay on Sartre
## by Denis Hollier
## translated by Jeffrey Mehlman

(University of Minnesota Press, 217 pp., $14.95)

Jean-Paul Sartre's *The Freud Scenario* is the astonishing product of a delectable series of misunderstandings. The scenario was commissioned by John Huston, who wanted a film on the heroic period of Freud's discovery of psychoanalysis, a film that "breathed brimstone: Freud's descent into the unconscious should be as terrifying as Dante's descent into Hell." Huston turned to Sartre, whom he considered the "ideal author" for such a screenplay, someone who knew Freud's work "intimately and would have an objective and logical approach." Huston, of course, was wrong on all counts. Sartre was a fine example of resistance to Freudian psychoanalysis; he denied the existence of the unconscious, and proposed his own version of "existential psychoanalysis" in the books on Baudelaire and Genet. (The monstrous Flaubert was still to come.)

In fact, Sartre did not know Freud's work at all well. To write the scenario, he reread the *Studies on Hysteria* and *The Interpretation of Dreams*, read the recently published Freud-Fliess correspondence, and (according to Annie Cohen-Solal in her recent biography of Sartre) had a friend translate for him the first volume of Ernest Jones's biography of Freud, which had yet to appear in French. Then he produced a scenario for a film that would have run seven hours. Asked for cuts, he made the screenplay longer, in typical Sartrean fashion. A few weeks of attempted collaboration with Huston at his Irish country estate only made matters worse.

The scenario was eventually cut and reworked by two professional screenwriters; Sartre had his name removed from the credits, and the film was released in 1962 under the title *Freud, The Secret Passion*, with Montgomery Clift in the title role and Susannah York as his star patient Cecily. It adds further savor to the episode to learn that first choice for the female lead was Marilyn Monroe. She refused: according to Huston, her own analyst thought a film on Freud was a bad idea, because Anna Freud opposed the project.

The film was never much of a success, but this whole implausible episode gave us the massive manuscript of Sartre's scenario, which is in many ways a brilliant achievement, a kind of unclassifiable document in the history of dialogues between great minds. J.-B. Pontalis, a psychoanalyst and a long-time friend of Sartre, who has skillfully edited the scenario and provided an incisive introduction, points out that the Freud scenario in many ways prefigures *The Family Idiot*, Sartre's attempt to provide a total understanding of Flaubert, his existential situation, psychic conditions, and life choices.

"What can we know of a man?" Sartre asks on the threshold of his 3,000 pages on Flaubert. He wants to grasp Freud in the same manner, to seize at once all the factors and forces that made the Viennese fin-de-siècle bourgeois, the Jew, the neurologist, the neurotic, the ambitious careerist, and the compassionate doctor, into the inventor of a revolutionary new mode of thought. As Pontalis notes, the trouble is partly that the psychic reality uncovered by Freud is by its nature resistant to representation: it is the very opposite of event. Making Freud's discovery of the unconscious into a film risks turning it into a comic-strip version of the Great Doctor and the Great Unknown. And to some extent that is what Sartre has produced. But it's high entertainment, the very best of intellectual melodramas.

Sartre tells us near the beginning of his autobiography, *The Words*, that he never had a superego; his father died shortly after Jean-Paul's birth, thus exempting



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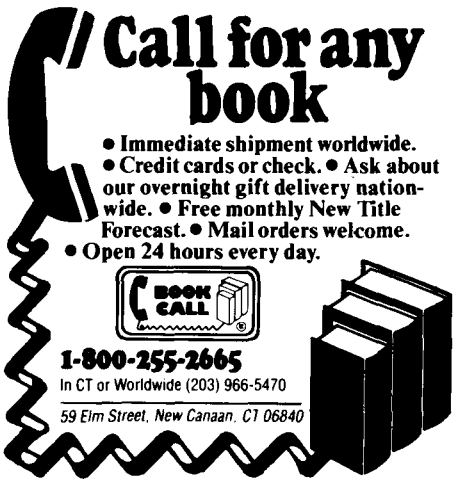
the son from the internalized paternal Law. This was, Sartre claims, a liberation: "There is no good father, that's the rule. Don't lay the blame on men but on the bond of paternity, which is rotten." *The Freud Scenario* is perhaps all the more remarkable as a piece of imaginative recreation in that it turns on Freud's relations to a series of father figures: his neurological mentor Theodor Meynert, the great J.-B. Charcot in Paris, then Josef Breuer, and after him Wilhelm Fliess. Freud's relations to these masters, overly deferential and then more and more marked by friction and hostility, are very effectively rendered. So, too, is his relation to the biological father, Jakob, whose death in 1896 both forced and freed Freud to undertake his self-analysis, and the reluctant but decisive discovery of his hostility to his father, thus of the Oedipus complex. In the final sequence of the scenario, Freud says farewell to Breuer, in the cemetery near Jakob's grave, and recognizes that he must now carry on without fathers, real, surrogate, or metaphysical: "I'm alone and the sky has emptied."

Sartre's drama thus plays itself out over a ten-year period, from the eve of Freud's departure for his apprenticeship to Charcot in Paris to shortly after his father's death. It leads us through his early experiments in neurology to the investigation of hysteria, and the use and abandonment of hypnosis; to the discovery of the sexual etiology of the neuroses—with, at first, the theory that a literal seduction by a paternal figure lay behind these cases; to the beginnings of self-analysis, the recognition of the role of childhood fantasies of seduction, and the discovery, in himself as in his patients, of the universal law of the Oedipus complex. Sartre thus records what was essentially an intellectual adventure of discovery and invention, fraught with obstacles, backslidings, moments of impasse and despair. His Freud is a kind of lonely, neurotic, and heroic Moses figure, a pariah through his reluctant discovery of the demons of sexuality and aggression. Sartre probably exaggerates (as indeed Freud himself was wont to do) the image of isolation and ostracism. But it's the stuff of good drama.

IN *The Words*, Sartre mentions that he was often accused of being overfamiliar with "the illustrious dead," treating Baudelaire and Flaubert without due reverence. *The Freud Scenario* has this same quality. The establishment of an intimacy with a great historical figure allows Sartre to extrapolate freely, to find ways of dramatizing Freud's inner adventure in terms that maintain none too strict an adherence to the letter of the facts (to the extent that we know them) and that often have a larger-than-life quality. Those characters who have a recorded place in history are carried off with real élan. Charcot with his hysterics in the Salpêtrière hospital, for instance, is just the Charcot of historical romance that one would want. And Breuer and Fliess are portrayed with a broad and generous brush that gives them just the right celluloid reality: Breuer the urbane, paternal, protective figure who falters and draws back when his son pushes too far; Fliess the slightly diabolical figure whose pathbreaking ideas on sexuality never go anywhere because of the obsessive limitations of his intellectual system. With Freud's patients, Sartre gives himself an even freer hand, making composites. Cäcilie, for instance, who is mentioned occasionally in the *Studies on Hysteria*, absorbs many of the features of Breuer's famous patient Anna O., as well as traits from a number of Freud's other patients, and further dramatic business that seems to come more from the theater of Jean Genet than from any Freudian text.

Sartre indeed invents some extraordinary scenes, ones that occasionally seem so right that you go back to your Freud bookshelf to try to find the source. One of the most remarkable is at the deathbed of Theodor Meynert, the neurologist who had been Freud's teacher but had publicly turned against him when Freud proposed that hysteria had psychic sources and could be found in men as well as women. Sartre is extrapolating here from a very brief passage in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, where Freud mentions that Meynert, during Freud's farewell visit to him in the hospital, admitted to being himself a case of male hysteria. Sartre invents a sensational encounter, where Meynert with failing breath tells Freud: "Break the silence. Betray us. Find the secret. Expose it to the light of day, even if it means revealing your own." The self-analysis to come is prepared as a detective story, an urgent search for something lurking in the shadows.

Self-analysis on the face of it seems to offer relatively few possibilities for overt dramatization; and one is impressed again and again by Sartre's true sense of theatricality, his capacity to turn the inward search into scenes of dialogue and telling confrontations. And Sartre does not hesitate to exploit the potential of the dream, both Freud's dreams and those of his patients. Dream sequences in the cinema are usually abject failures, perhaps because the whole medium is so dreamlike that one does not want to be reminded of it; but Sartre's conceptions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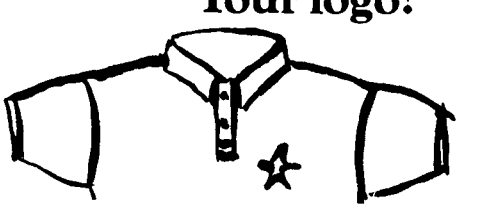

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are certainly ingenious. At one point, he proposes that one of Cäcilie's dreams be shot in color (the rest of the film being black and white), using artificial, painterly colors: for instance, a high red tower next to a green sea with white-crested waves. The symbolism is none too subtle, but quite possibly effective. Another splendid example comes in Sartre's rendering of the "You Are Requested to Close the Eyes" dream, dreamed by Freud the night before his father's funeral, which becomes something worthy of Luis Buñuel.

"What can we know of a man?" Sartre's insistent and troubling question is also posed by psychoanalysis, in a very different register. One can't say that *The Freud Scenario* is a true act of knowing by one man of another. Too much is invented, dramatic but not necessarily convincing, in the realm of effective imagery rather than incisive characterization. But that is also the virtue of the *Scenario*: it dramatizes, by way of proposed images, a certain relation of Sartre to his new discovery of the possibilities of psychoanalysis, the way his effort to re-create Freud's intellectual adventure reacts on his own creative imagination.

Pontalis claims that Sartre's work on Freud led to the intention of undertaking an autobiography entitled *Jean sans terre*. It was never written, though Sartre did complete the account of his childhood published as *The Words*. There's not much that's recognizably psychoanalytic in *The Words*. Yet the very project of recovering his own early childhood, of lifting the amnesias shielding it, of dramatizing a psychological relation to language, may have been triggered in Sartre by his re-creation of Freud's journey into the self.

WHILE Denis Hollier makes no mention of *The Freud Scenario* (the French original of Hollier's book dates from 1982, before the *Scenario* had been published), there are a few very acute paragraphs in *The Politics of Prose* about Sartre's rejection of psychoanalysis. Hollier suggests that Sartre's attacks on psychoanalysis represent a reaction to the threat of introjection and incorporation of this "other" of his thought: something that—like the concept of the unconscious itself—is too close to home to be admitted as the other *within* oneself, and thus must be kept at bay, or expelled, in an act that Hollier calls "the repression of repression."

I simplify somewhat Hollier's very subtle argument. *The Politics of Prose* is indeed a subtle, elusive, playful book, and perhaps the most probing account of Sartre the writer that we have. The subtitle to the French edition of Hollier's book is "Sartre in the Year 1940." This has inexplicably disappeared from the English version, which is unfortunate because it stressed Hollier's main interest: Sartre following the publication of *Nausea* in 1938, on the verge of mobilization for the war, the experience of captivity in Stalag XII D, and the conversion to the notion of a "committed" literature. Much of Hollier's book analyzes the contradictions inherent in that notion. He discusses its necessary assignment of the ends of literature to something outside literature itself, hence its militant distinction between, on the one hand, the inward-turning language games of poetry—with the accusation that the major 20th-century writers progressively closed themselves in a hermetic world of language—and, on the other hand, a transparent utilitarian, political prose. Hollier is an unrelenting critic of Sartrean concepts. Yet at the same time he is a wonderfully intimate expositor of Sartre's works, especially *Nausea*, to which he circles back again and again.

"Some of these days, you'll miss me, honey," says the Sophie Tucker song that Roquentin, the protagonist of *Nausea*, listens to over and over again on the scratched record in the café in Bouville. It was Sartre who announced, in his foreword to the first issue of *Les Temps modernes*, that "it is our wish to miss nothing of our time." One can say that he missed the peculiarly modern insistence on the nature of man as a linguistic animal that developed from Saussure through structuralist theory, and that was at least latent in psychoanalysis from its beginnings. That is, we have come more and more to believe that language is not simply an instrument, outside us, available for utilitarian (and political) ends, but part of our very definition, something that does not belong to the individual but is rather a system that works on and through the individual. Yet Sartre's misses and misunderstandings are, as Hollier elegantly and enticingly demonstrates, full of interest. Hollier's book initiates the process of rereading Sartre that we will need to undertake over the years to come.

PETER BROOKS

Peter Brooks, the author of *Reading for the Plot* (Vintage), teaches French and comparative literature at Yale University.

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# WASHINGTON DIARIST

## *Local Heroes*

I'M NOT PROUD. I take my freebies wherever I can get them, and so seized upon the invitation to attend the opening of Washington's newest movie complex, the Cineplex Odeon. It wasn't any particular film that was opening, but the theater itself: a sparkling, underground complex lined with marble (or a good imitation) and tasteful wall-to-wall carpet. I'm told that Washington's crème de la crème was there, although the only celebrity I recognized was Bud McFarlane, looking sprightly in a beautifully fitted tuxedo—clearly not the rented kind. Otherwise, the guests at this premiere weren't much to look at: lots of beautiful clothes, but very few beautiful people. In Washington, despite what *No Way Out* and *Broadcast News* would have you believe, power and glamour don't necessarily go hand in hand.

HERALDED AS THE newest trend in movie theaters, the Odeon is pleasant: its screens are several times larger than its exit signs, its seats are plush, and its popcorn slick with real butter. Garth Drabinsky, the wealthy Canadian developer underwriting the Odeon, is smart. Since the size of the movie-going audience is threatened by the economy and convenience of the VCR, he's trying to change the reasons why people go to movies, to make the experience more high brow. That explains the lofty guest list. But really all Drabinsky is doing is selling pop culture with a veneer of sophistication. These days, when one can feed a family on what it takes to see a show on Broadway or at the Kennedy Center, a lot of people will settle for the veneer. Even if, at six dollars a ticket, it costs a few bucks more than it used to.

GALLUP HAS JUST RELEASED its annual list of America's ten most admired men, and the winners are a pretty sorry lot. Gary Hart ranks third, George Bush (honestly, George Bush) fifth, Oliver North seventh, Lee Iacocca eighth. Maybe it was a bad year for heroes, but surely there are better role models than these. To my mind none can compare to my childhood hero, Thurman Munson, the gruff but warmhearted catcher for the New York Yankees. Munson was an unlikely idol: he had a stubby body, pudgy cheeks, and a funny name. I liked him because he wasn't a natural athlete, just an ordinary guy who loved baseball and worked hard enough to become great at it. Since I was the kind of batter whose best chance of getting on base was to be hit by a pitch, I admired Munson's perseverance. In 1979 Munson died in a plane crash, and I cried when I heard the news. Before the Yankees played their next game, the fans at Yankee Stadium held a moment of silence that lasted for minutes, broken only by the sounds of these fans, perhaps the world's most cynical and jaded, openly sobbing.

MY CURRENT HERO IS . . . well, to be honest, it's hard to think of one. I'd like to, but there seems to be a shortage: the Reagan era hasn't given us many people to admire. The administration itself is a bastion of incompetence, intolerance, and greed. And it requires a certain moral suppleness to admire some of the people whom this president has celebrated: Frank Sinatra, Oliver North, Jonas Savimbi, and the *contras*. But there's one notable exception to the hero dearth: Surgeon General C. Everett Koop. Just a few years ago, Koop was best known for his fervent opposition to abortion. Liberals attacked his nomination for surgeon general, charging that he would bend and distort the law to promote his social views. As it turns out, Koop is one of the few top administration officials who hasn't done that. His opposition to abortion hasn't diminished, but he's shown a compassion for the people involved that other conservatives should adopt. And he's never let his moral opposition to abortion overwhelm his acceptance of its legality. In his fight for AIDS education, Koop has been the only person in the administration to understand that saving lives is more important than moral proselytizing. He reminds people that ideology has no place in disease control. The next president, Democrat or Republican, would be wise to invite Dr. Koop back for another term.

JONATHAN YARDLEY, the book critic for the *Washington Post*, is starting to sound like Allan Bloom. Yardley argues in a recent article that a new generation of literature professors is lowering its standards in search of undiscovered writers. He quotes a *New York Times* article saying that these professors oppose "the idea of an enduring pantheon of writers and their works" as "an elitist one largely defined by white men who are Northeastern academics and critics." Consequently they have sought out new writers, frequently blacks and women, who (Yardley says) aren't as good as Shakespeare and Milton, Emerson and Faulkner. The motive? It's not that they think these books are important; they just want to institutionalize their radical '60s politics. All the classic authors have been studied to death, and so young academics, desperate for tenure, are trying to make careers studying practitioners of pulp fiction such as Louis L'Amour. Yardley concludes by dubbing the professors behind this trend "young fascists."

AS A RECENT college graduate, I can say that he is in one respect correct. Many professors are challenging the literary canon, which *is* dominated by white male authors anointed by white male critics. But this hardly makes them "young fascists." They simply argue that many valuable books go unrecognized for reasons unrelated to their literary merits. Though I imagine there are exceptions, these new academics are hardly rushing to embrace Barbara Cartland. (Which seems to me the best way *not* to win tenure, especially in English departments dominated by more traditional senior professors.) Nor are students abandoning Shakespeare in favor of Zora Neale Hurston, as Yardley fears. At Yale, where this trend has been evident for some time, students don't feel compelled to choose between studying the classics and the neglected moderns. One could easily begin by studying Homer and Virgil and later find time for Alice Walker and Adrienne Rich. In any case, students are perfectly capable of considering the relative quality of the old versus the new. In past columns Yardley himself has championed books overlooked by general audiences and scholars. That makes his current tirade all the more mystifying.

**R. B.**



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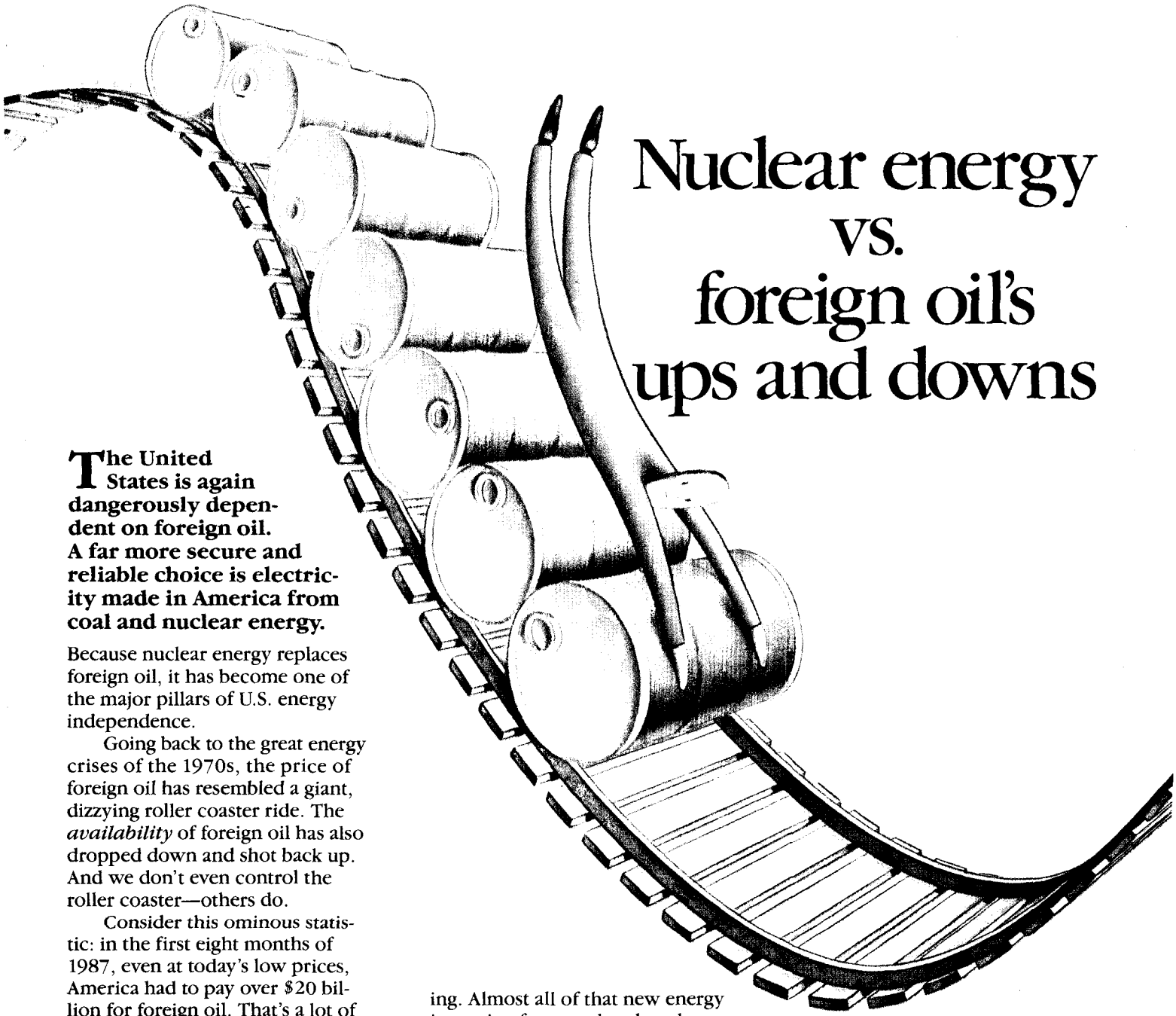

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